Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

CHURCHILL COALITION
—and the ALTERNATIVE

by

D. N. PRITT

K.C., M.P.

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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CONTENTS

	page
Notes of the Month *By* R. P. D. *Labour and the New World Situation*	247
Churchill Coalition—And the Alternative *By* D. N. PRITT	259
India—A Call to the British People *By* HARRY POLLITT	263
Dialectical Materialism and Modern Science *By* J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S.	266
Food—What Could Be Done *By* GEORGE MATTHEWS	269
On the "March into the Ukraine" *By* MARK FOUR	275
Camouflaged Statistics *By* PETER FIELD	282
Document of the Month The Indian Trade Union Movement	284
Book Reviews: How to Arrange World Wars : and How to Fight for Peace *By* E. M. WINTERTON	285
A Classic of Lenin *By* WILLIAM RUST	288

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Notes of the Month

Labour and the New World Situation—New Dilemmas of Imperialism—The Hour of Decision—A Turning Point of World Politics—The Peace Question—United States and the War—Roosevelt's Postponed Spech—Three Claimants to World Power—Whither British Imperialism?—Towards the Setting Sunt—Facing Hard Facts—Lloyd George and Churchill—Dilemmas of British Policy—Ruling Class Fears—Dilemmas of German Imperialism — Germany and the Soviet Union — Dilemmas of American Imeprialism — Changing Relations of World Politics — Significance of the Hess Episode—Instability and the Perspective—The Lesson for the Labour Party Conference.

WHAT NEW moves are preparing in the international situation? At the very moment when the Labour Party Conference is meeting at Whitsun the most critical turning point of the war is developing. Basic issues of war and of peace; the whole perspective of the war; the whole policy of the Great Powers, of the United States, of Germany and of Britain; the extension of the war in the Middle East; the relations of the two warring imperialist camps and the Soviet Union; the advancing sweep of the national and colonial movements which are shaking the ground beneath the feet of their rival imperialist conquerors, at the same time as the first stirring of the people is revealing itself within the imperialist war-making countries: all these issues are now advancing to the crucible of decision, and are producing a situation of tension, of sharp moves and counter-moves, of mingled diplomacy, strategy and armed action, of vacillations within the ruling class, of sudden turns and surprises which call for the utmost alertness and readiness of working class leadership. The underlying issues of 1939 are returning to the front in a yet more advanced form. A singular coincidence has linked each Labour Party Conference during the war with such a sharp turn of its development. The Bournemouth Conference last year coincided with the collapse of Chamberlain, the formation of the Churchill Coalition Government, and the headlong extension of the war to Western Europe. The London Conference is coinciding with a yet sharper phase of the same deepening crisis of the international situation and of the situation in this country.

WHAT IS THE essential character of the present situation? The crisis of imperialism, which staggered through the decade of war preparation after the world economic crisis and finally sought to resolve its dilemmas with the desperate gamble of war in 1939, has found no solution through nearly two years of war, but has only reached an even more extreme entanglement, in which war and peace alike present still heavier dilemmas. There is division, not only between the rival imperialist camps,

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but within each imperialist camp. The bankrupt rulers, sensing the growing disillusionment of the masses and the stirrings of all the peoples, seek in vain to find a way to unloose the knots in which their own previous policies have fettered them. But once again they find no way save to seek to cut the knots by the arbitrament of the sword; and with each desperate venture they plunge deeper into the abyss.

BEHIND THE fog of sensationalist mystification in which the press treatment on both sides has sought to conceal its significance, the episode of the Hess Mission and its reception by the British Government is a symptom which has cast lurid light on the intrigues, the double-dealing and the backstairs negotiations of the reactionary ruling circles of all the war-making countries in the midst of the conflict. It is a symptom which has deepened the distrust of the masses in all the countries at war towards the ruling class. But the people are still groping for their own solution. After one year of coalition the gilt of the Churchill Tory-Labour Coalition Government is tarnished; but the ruling strata can offer no alternative, as the Parliamentary debate on the vote of confidence laid bare. The hour of decision calls with ever greater insistence for a united working class and democratic opposition which can break with the policies of imperialism and give leadership to the people in this deepening crisis. Herein lies the responsibility of the delegates to the Labour Party Conference, who will have to draw the balance-sheet of one year of coalition, to face the sharp alternatives of the present situation and to take decisions which will bear heavy consequences for the coming crucial year.

BEFORE COMING to the problems and tasks of the Labour Party Conference, it is necessary to make some estimate of the relation of forces in the present world situation, whose precarious balance gives rise to the new turning point and governs the inner political situation. The war has passed through two main phases. The first ended in the spring of last year with the completion of the war in Eastern Europe and with the signing of the Soviet-Finnish peace. For a short space of time the possibility of a general peace, as originally put forward in the German-Soviet proposals of the end of September, 1939, arose anew, since the war had not yet opened out in the West. That possibility was not taken. The war blazed out in Western Europe. France collapsed, betrayed by its ruling class, which feared a popular revolution more than the foreign enemy. The war extended to the Mediterranean, to North Africa, and the Balkans. This phase reached completion with the British evacuation from the Balkans, the final French-German Agreement, and the effective establishment of German domination of the European Continent west of the Soviet Union.

THE WAR could now only develop further as world war with the direct entry of the United States into the war and the drive of German imperialism to the Middle East. The question of peace arose anew in a furtive fashion of behind-the-scenes discussion at this turning point; but the conditions were no longer the same as a year ago. The war had driven

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too deep, and already changed too profoundly the relations of power of imperialism for any easy temporary solution within the framework of imperialism. The weakened British imperialism had no longer the cards in its hands for an advantageous approach to the peace question until it could first restore the balance by drawing in American imperialism. The peace question within the conditions of imperialism could now only arise as the plan for a counter-revolutionary alliance in accordance with the lingering hopes of the British imperialists, supported by some sections within German imperialism who fear the effects of closer association with the Soviet Union and the ultimate menace of Anglo-American power, to divert the German offensive against the British Middle Eastern possessions into an offensive against the Soviet Union. Such a solution would be ideal from the point of view of the City and the Empire, as Churchill's repeated longing references have made clear. But such a plan is less consonant with the interests of German imperialism, in the moment of its military victories, to abandon the hoped-for prize of the British Empire possessions, turn aside and kindly save the British Empire by taking on a far more formidable antagonist. The problem of 1939 recurs in a deepened form.

IT IS evident to the main dominant sections of British imperialism that in the present menacing situation a very much heavier array of power and pressure must be brought to bear on German imperialism to restore the balance, before any such final solution can be entertained, and that until then the wishful-thinking dreams of the single-track pro-Fascists remain in the air. The original light-hearted Chamberlain-Daladier plan to accomplish their aims by the combined power of the British and French Empires, through their declaration of war in September, 1939, ended in a complete fiasco, just as their previous Munich plan ended in a fiasco. The plan broke down with the collapse of the French Empire and the subsequent weakening and critical situation of the British Empire. All hopes are now centred on the United States as the only power sufficient to be capable of changing the present unfavourable balance of forces. The question of the United States' direct entry into the war becomes the crucial immediate question of the war.

THE United States imperialists, in face of the collapse of France (now completed with the adherence of Vichy to the German "New Order" in Europe) and the extreme weakening and crucial situation of Britain, are compelled to hasten their plans and advance more rapidly towards direct entry into the war than they had originally intended. This becomes the more urgent, since they find themselves compelled by the strategic situation to envisage the possibility of the collapse of Britain (Stimson's broadcast of May 6, "If Britain falls," etc.), or the orientation of British policy towards even an unfavourable understanding with Germany, as the lesser evil in contrast to the suicidal consequences of a protracted war and deepening subjection to Wall Street. To anticipate such a menacing possibility the whole stage is set in America, with the transparent manipulation by the multi-millionaires, to hasten the successive steps towards entry into the war and to mobilise public opinion and establish

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the necessary internal dictatorial forms. For this purpose official quarters sedulously spread the most fantastic scare-stories of the imminent danger of the invasion of the American continent by Germany. But there is visibly sharp division within the United States, both from the dissident sections within the ruling class (Lindbergh and the Isolationists), and from the masses of the people, as shown in the surging strike movement, in the response to the American Peace Mobilisation, and in the continuous results of the Gallup polls which have shown, even as late as the end of April, 81 per cent. still opposed to entry into the war. Finally the scene was set for Roosevelt to make his decisive declaration of policy in his speech to the Pan-American Union on May 14. But on May 12 the news was released of the Hess visit to Britain, revealing the alternative forces at work in Britain and Germany. Roosevelt's speech was immediately postponed to May 27. Such is the present set-up reached.

IN THIS WAY a new stage of the world relations of imperialism and of the world situation is opening out. Previously, after the collapse of France, we analysed the consequences of this elimination of a weaker imperialist Power and the resultant laying bare of the basic tripartite conflict of the three main power-centres and monopoly capitalist groupings of Western imperialism. First, the British Empire, with its centre in the City of London ; sprawling over one quarter of the world ; the oldest, once the wealthiest, still the largest in colonial possessions and subject populations ; but the most backward of the three in modern capitalist development and teachnique ; the most corrupt, decayed and disorganised ; with a metropolitan base of only forty-five millions in the home country and another twenty millions of the White populations in the semi-independent Dominions ; and faced with the rising revolt of the colonial peoples, constituting six-sevenths of the Empire. Second, German monopoly capital, controlling now a compact home population of eighty millions, and dominating directly or indirectly some two hundred and forty millions of Western and Central Continental Europe ; with the most highly developed large-scale capitalist organisation, industrial technique and military and air power ; but a mushroom empire of the sword, based on the most ruthless dictatorship and suppression of the class struggle at home, faced with the rising national revolt of the conquered peoples in Europe, and compelled to make terms with the mighty Socialist Power on its eastern frontier. Third, United States monopoly capital, overwhelmingly the richest and most powerful in wealth and resources ; the first world power in technique and volume of production ; with a home population of one hundred and thirty millions, and dominating to a considerable degree the remaining one hundred and thirty millions of the rest of the American Continent ; but still with much looser political organisation, less developed military strength and only beginning industrial mobilisation for war.

TO-DAY, under the fierce test of war, this alignment has begun to move a stage further. Once again the weaker contestant begins to show ominous cracks and fissures under the strain, and to move into a satellite

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position. British imperialism is more and more visibly driven hard between the pressure of the two more powerful monopoly capitalist structures of the United States and Germany. Either orientation to the United States, or orientation to Germany: this becomes the line of division within the ruling class. The entire official policy of the Churchill Coalition Government is openly and avowedly based on the calculation of American aid as the sole hope of victory. In every Government speech and declaration this is the one trump card. But this explicit and public avowal of dependance on American imperialism is inevitably equivalent to the admission of the decline and passing of the independence of British imperialism. Against this perspective, and all that it involves, sections of the British ruling class begin to look covertly for the possibility of an understanding with German imperialism. But these tendencies have not yet any strong ground, in view of the obviously unfavourable situation. The dominant trend is the Anglo-American trend. The British imperialists look for survival as the partners, even though as the junior partners, of American imperialism. The tripartite conflict passes into the conflict of two camps: the Anglo-American camp and the German camp. The contest of the two strongest competitive Powers of world imperialism stands out with increasing sharpness, of American and German imperialism; and the main prize of the contest appears as the British Empire.

"WESTWARD the course of Empire takes its way." Our statesmen, under the inspiration of the blood-bath, have become fond of recourse to the poets. Roosevelt greeted Churchill with a snatch of Longfellow. Churchill replied with a felicitous excerpt from the works of Arthur Hugh Clough—the melancholy poet of Victorian agnosticism and religious doubt. It remains for Roosevelt to cap him with a favourite passage from Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and for Churchill to respond with an appropriate inspiring thought from the copious treasury of Martin Tupper. But Churchill's choice conveyed a symbolism which cut deeper than he may have intended. Not only did he make his fitting choice, not from the revolutionary tradition of the giants of English literature, but from the most typical poetaster of the public school chapel, the gloomy apostle of thankless duty and a hopeless hope in dreary progress, struggling manfully with an over-mastering sense of spiritual hollowness and a crumbling world before the triumphant onset of science and reason and new forces beyond the ken of Victorian class morality. He chose the very line which expressed, as the only answer to the deep-seated mood of despair ("Say not the struggle nought availeth . . . the tired waves vainly breaking") the sense of a doomed order: "But westward, look, the land is bright." The sun sets in the west. The brightness that is seen as the only hope is the brightness that is passing away and giving place to darkness. The people are called to turn their eyes, not to the rising sun, but to the setting sun. But then, if he had called them to turn their eyes to the rising sun, to the east, he would have had to call them to turn their eyes to the Socialist Soviet Union, to the advancing millions of India and China, to the legions of human liberation on the march for the ending of

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the doomed order of Western imperialism, to the rising sun of Socialism. For the statesman of the doomed Western imperialism his quotation was adequate, and it is adequate to meet it with the line above from the older Bishop Berkeley "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," or the echoing line from Quincy Adams' oration at Plymouth in the beginning of the nineteenth century: "Westward the star of Empire takes its way."

THE DEBATE in the House of Commons on the vote of confidence in the Government on May 6-7 revealed the deep disquiet of the British bourgeoisie. The content of the speeches was contrary to the vote; the speeches were all criticism; the vote was almost unanimous confidence, because they could do no other, without challenging the very basis of the ruling class forces which have produced this outcome. But hard realities crept out in the speeches, to which there could be no answer from the Government benches. The disparity of forces, the inequality of capitalist development, underlying the British decline, and explained with clear simplicity in Varga's article in the November *Labour Monthly*, came out, not in theory, but in concrete facts. Thus, if we take the crucial index of steel production, Hore-Belisha pointed out that British steel production amounts to 15 million tons a year, or, with the rest of the Empire's 4 million, a total of 19 million tons. German steel production stands at 24 million tons, and with the 25 million tons of the occupied countries, reaches an available total (not dependent on sea transit) of 49 million tons. United States steel production stands at 85 million tons; but he claimed that only 8½ million tons of this were available for arms production, making an Anglo-American total of 27½ million tons against the German total of 49 millions, with the added proviso that nearly half the Anglo-American total is dependent on trans-ocean transport.

SIMILAR FIGURES were available in respect of man-power. ("We are raising an army of between 4 million and 5 million men. The question is: What are we to use them for? Invasion of Europe in the teeth of an army of 10 million highly trained and well-equipped men seems to me to be a fatuous idea"—Lloyd George), and even more overwhelmingly in respect of labour-power for production. No answer was attempted to these figures from the Government benches or in the florid oratory of Churchill's summing up. But it is sufficiently evident from them, first, that British imperialism in isolation is out of the running, and that the entire Governmental calculation for victory depends on American aid; and second, that even the success of this calculation depends on the speed, volume and effectiveness of American aid and the speed of American mobilisation.

BUT EVEN on the question of American aid doubts were cast in the debate. Thus Lloyd George gave the warning:

> "We have to hold out until America is ready with her equipment; but it is most important not to exaggerate what we are going to get,

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> or rather, how quickly we are going to get it. I warn my fellow-countrymen not to be impatient. . . . I have had experience of American war organisation. It is full of disappointments."

And again:

> "Germany was giving 63 per cent. of her national income to armaments; Great Britain was spending between 50 and 58 per cent.; and 12 per cent. of America's national income was devoted to armaments. America is not at war. She is giving 12 per cent. of her national income towards war now. . . . .
>
> "The Prime Minister said that there were 200 million between the British Empire and the U.S.A., and that on the other side there were 70 million Germans. That is a very misleading figure. I hope the people of this country will not run away with the idea that this is the position."

He went on to show that half of American preparations must necessarily be directed, not to the war in Europe, but to the Pacific and Japan, leaving 130 million as the available Anglo-American man-power, whereas the 80 million Germans had mobilised the manufacturing man-power of France, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Italy, etc., resulting in "figures which are superior to ours in what the Prime Minister calls life energy upon which war work is dependent." Churchill's amiable reply to this analysis was to compare Lloyd George to Marshal Petain—thus revealing the profound unity of the leading representatives of the British ruling class in the present crisis behind the façade of the unanimous vote of confidence.

THE CRISIS of British imperialism is thus reflected in a crisis of the ruling class and of British policy (even though every attempt is made to cover it for fear of the consequent mass awakening). While official policy is still set entirely towards American aid as the sole hope, the old optimistic after-dinner confidence in this perspective and in the "vast potential resources" (Halifax in his speech at Minneapolis on May 9 could still speak proudly of the Anglo-American corner in 70 per cent. of the world's oil, 85 per cent. of the world's copper and 91 per cent. of the world's rubber, those typical spoils of the enslaved and exploited colonial peoples, as "the trump cards in the hands of freedom"), this old optimisite confidence begins to became diminished, and to be shot through with doubts. It begins to become recognised, not only that potential resources and effective mobilisations are not necessarily the same thing; and that in addition the Battle of the Atlantic has still to be won before such resources are available; but that, even in the most favourable alternative of American aid becoming available with sufficient speed and volume, the consequent restoration of the balance opens the prospect of a long and destructive war, with menacing consequences to their existing social system.

CHURCHILL in his reply to the House of Commons debate, after speaking of "heavy losses," and adding to his former prospect of "blood and tears, toil and sweat," the additional prospect of "mistakes, shortcomings and disappointments," went on to speak of 1943 as the year in

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which the balance might begin to turn. Halifax has spoken of 20 years of war. How much of the existing social system will survive 20 years of war, or even ten or five years? This apprehensions bears in ever more strongly on the thought of the ruling class, all the more as they see the already rising popular movements and the steadily growing relative strength of the Soviet Union, while imperialism drives forward on its path of destruction. The arch-reactionary Hearst in America openly expresses this thought as he sees the prospect of a Ten Years' War, and prophesies that this will lead to

> "some sadly definite end of utter destruction and complete prostration. There will not be a shred of democracy left anywhere in the world at the end of a Ten Years' War, and there is mighty little left now in this country and less in England" (Hearst, in the *New York American*, April, 1941).

Even the London *Times* begins to express alarm at the prospect of an "interminable" struggle, and its menace to "civilisation":

> "If such a calamity as the loss of Egypt were to occur, the war could still be won; but much of the good work of the blockade would be undone, and we should be faced with the prospect of a struggle which might become almost interminable and accompanied by destruction on both sides which would set back the clock of civilisation for many years." (*Times*, April 29, 1941.)

With such thoughts arising in the minds of the ruling class, the stage is set for a deepening crisis of British policy, for dissensions and vacillations, for suddent turns and moves, and for such symptoms as were revealed in the reception of the Hess Mission—in short, for a situation calling more than ever for the energetic leadership and action of the working class and the democratic opposition forces in a position of deepening dangers and of bankruptcy of all sections of the ruling class.

BUT THIS IS still only one side of the picture. For German imperialism, although it appears at this moment at the height of its strength, after a dazzling series of military victories, with the prospect of a Eur-African Empire in its grasp, and the plans of extension of its drive into the Middle East, is also in fact subjected to extreme strain and faced with heavy dilemmas. The German rulers understand very well the ultimate superiority of resources on the side of the Anglo-American coalition, with their command of world sea-power, if the war is prolonged. They have to face the rising strength of the national liberation movements in Europe, which will never accept subjection, but which by no means look to British imperialism as their saviour, and begin to take on more and more of a mass popular character, with increasing numbers looking towards an ultimate socialist solution, and finding their future in a Socialist Europe in unity with the Soviet Union. The Middle East, the cockpit of conflict of rival empires over the spoils, is at the same time the blazing hearth of colonial liberation struggles, which are opposed to subservience to either imperialism and whose interests equally lie in unity with the Soviet Union. Within Germany the Nazi rulers know that they

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hold power on the edge of a precipice, violenty holding down and suppressing a latent and unresolved social crisis, with the ultimate superiority of strength on the side of the working class.

ABOVE ALL, in order to face Anglo-American imperialism, the Nazi rulers have had to make their peace with the Socialist Soviet Union, thus dealing a deadly blow to their whole ideological basis. Step by step since the outbreak of war they have had to make concession which, as the article of Mark Four in the current issue demonstrates, have enormously strengthened the strategic position of the Soviet Union. They are having now in the present crisis to consider negotiations which would still further strengthen the position of the Soviet Union, with the ulterior consequences of again increasing the prestige of Bolshevism and undermining their social basis in Germany. Small wonder that in this situation the German rulers should also hesitate and look for the possibility of an alternative course; and that, side by side with the intensified driving forward of the war, with the military preparations on the borders of the Soviet Union, and with the approach of renewed negotiations with the Soviet Union, they should put out such feelers as the Hess Mission. All these simultaneous contradictory moves are symptomatic of the depth of the crisis of imperialism and of the present turning point of the international situation.

WHAT OF American imperialism? Up to the present the lords of Wall Street have enormously profited by the war. Without cost to themselves, without direct participation in the struggle, they have supplied munitions of war and amassed fabulous profits; they have fomented the war and hounded it on with the most bellicose utterances of all; they have weakened and exhausted their main imperialist rivals; they look with confidence to come out as the destined victors and inheritors of world power —in the words of Stimson, the United States Secretary of War, in his broadcast of May 6, as "the decisive winning power in the world conquest." But even the bright hopes of the American imperialists are shot with doubts. The tempo of the war has gone more rapidly than they anticipated; and their own mobilisation for total war, a process of years, has still much leeway to make up, while world events move with lightning speed. They see that, while the resources of imperialism are hurled into the furnace of war, the Soviet Union at peace grows in strength. They fear that the destined prize may yet elude them. They fear that Germany and Europe, in place of passing into subjection to Anglo-American control, may sooner, with the continuance of the conflict, pass into the social revolution. They fear that the British Empire, rather than submit to the process of continuous penetration and domination, may seek at the last moment to escape their grasp and reach a separate understanding with German imperialism. The divisions and conflicts of policy within American ruling circles grow more and more intense. It was on the day that the Hess Mission was announced that Roosevelt's promised decisive speech on American policy was postponed. The speech of Roosevelt on May 27 is now awaited as the destined signal.

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THUS THE balance of forces of the present international situation, underlying the complex moves and counter-moves, stand out with sharp clearness. Behind and alongside the conflict of imperialism is signalised in deepening light and shadow the basic conflict of imperialism and world socialism, developing in many forms over the world, affecting and transforming all issues, and receiving its sharpest expression, in respect of the relations of world power, in the relations of the two imperialist camps and the Soviet Union. The unresolved dilemmas of 1939 reappears in deepened form. The immediate protagonists of the imperialist war are Britain and Germany. Japan still pursues its localised war in the Far East. Behind Britain stands the greater power of the United States, which comes more to the forefront as the main driving force of the war, seeking to gain by the weakening of all the antagonists. On the other hand, in opposition to all the imperialist Powers, stands the socialist Power of the Soviet Union, pursuing its independent policy of socialist neutrality, and equally ready for action in the event of any menace to its interests, openly proclaiming the aims of world peace and the freedom of the peoples, and becoming more and more the orbit of attraction and of the hopes of the peoples. The imperialists, while locked in their own conflict, seek by every means to involve the Soviet Union in the war; but its strength has held the war at bay, at the same time as the possibility of sudden turns (increased by the dilemmas of the unsolved crisis of imperialism) make the utmost vigilance and readiness, equally of the Soviet Union and of the working people of all countries, more than ever urgent.

IT IS THIS complex international situation, basically differing in character from the last war, which governs the inner political situation in each country and the sharp turns of the international scene. The instability is extreme. The Hess episode has been a symptom of these sudden moves and conflicting forces. The speculative details of the secret facts are less important than the plain significance of the overt facts. In the midst of the conflict a leading representative of the Nazi Government, normally the personal representative of Hitler for exceptionally important missions, arrives in England on an avowedly diplomatic mission, and is received with the utmost deference, attention, and secrecy by the British Government. Whatever the formal status or nominal lack of status of such a mission (leaving room for the most formal repudiation on either side) it is evident that the Hess Mission is the expression and sign of those strands of policy, equally in Germany and in Britain, which seek anew to find an alternative to the disastrous extension of the imperialist war on the basis of reactionary common interests against the rising class forces and against the Soviet Union. A peculiar situation has led to a peculiar and "unorthodox" form of contact, at the same time as the conflict is intensified, at the same time as Britain presses forward its negotiations with the United States, and at the same time as Germany prepares to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Most significant was the reception in the British press in the first few days before it was considered politic to adopt a change of tone.

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IN FACT, the obstacles which stood in the way in 1939 are still more strongly present to-day. It is unlikely that the present negotiations can bear fruit at this stage. The scene is still set for the most extreme intensification of the conflict. But it is obvious that this situation, with the extreme instability of forces alike in international relations and in the internal situation in each country, holds the possibility at each point of the sharpest sudden turns and changes. What the episode emphasises is that, in the present crisis and bankruptcy of ruling class policy, all the changing alternatives of ruling class policy, or of different sections of the ruling class, whether of imperialist peace or imperialist war, are equally reactionary and disastrous from the standpoint of the interests of the people. This is the situation which makes urgent the most rapid development of an independent working class and democratic opposition which will be capable of carrying through a democratic policy, at home and abroad, in the interests of the people against the reactionary class forces which have brought them to the present point of extreme menace.

THE LABOUR PARTY Conference meets against the background of this situation and at this critical turning point. The promises of Bournemouth are as bankrupt to-day as those of Southport were at Bournemouth. The policy of coalition with Toryism, of support of imperialist reaction, has led to the present outcome. All the promises of Bournemouth, whether in respect of war aims, of democracy, of the end of profiteering, are to-day exposed by the event. The brazen proclamations of the new Executive declarations, proclaiming anew the "socialist" aims will not avail to hide the grim realities. The fight for socialism can only be led by an independent working class. But the first task, before there can be any meaning in the talk of the fight for socialism, is to break the bonds of alliance with Tory reaction, to establish the independence of the working class organisations, and to help to build up the independent working class and democratic movement which can fight for a common emergency programme to meet the plain needs of the present crisis through a Government representative of the working people. Every serious delegate to the Labour Party Conference can assist in building this common front by their stand against the bankrupt Coalition Tory-Labour policy and for a positive constructive alternative. As the crisis deepens, as the bankruptcy of the existing official Labour policy becomes more manifest with every new turn of the situation, so this choice presents itself with ever more inescapable insistence to the whole working class movement and confronts every delegate to the Labour Conference, every Labour representative, candidate or Member of Parliament, every trade union delegation and Divisional Labour Party in this hour of responsible decision.

R.P.D.

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FIRST RALLY

of the

Labour Monthly Discussion Groups

For the last eighteen months the LABOUR MONTHLY Discussion Groups have been growing in numbers and activity. In February, 1940, at the Labour Monthly Conference, there were only a few. By the end of 1940 there were fifty. This year in less than five months the number has leapt up to 200; their activity has increased; and with it the political influence of the Labour Monthly.

On Sunday, 25th May, the Discussion Groups held their first rally at the hall of the Royal Hotel in London. The chairman (R. Page Arnot), in welcoming the delegates on behalf of the Editorial Board, stressed the importance of this new development, which occurred in the twentieth year of the fight for socialism and peace carried on by this magazine of international labour.

The discussion, opened by Tom Balmer, had to deal with the function of the groups, their organisation and activities, the conduct of discussion in the groups, theoretical studies, the question of inter-group relations and the way in which groups could aid the Labour Monthly. A very practical discussion of these problems revealed a general agreement on aims and methods. The Editor, R. Palme Dutt, stressed the importance of the groups not setting up as new public bodies, sending delegates, etc., but as centres of enlightenment and educational discussions—to which end there could be no question of setting tests for membership.

In the evening the hall was crowded with visitors to the Rally. Dr. Alan Bush took the chair, and R. Palme Dutt spoke on "Marxism and the Present Situation."

A list of the Discussion Groups will be found on page 291.
A report of the Rally will be available for the groups.

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The Churchill Coalition —and the Alternative

BY D. N. PRITT, K.C., M.P.

TO MEET the growing dissatisfaction in the country, the Coalition Government initiated a debate in the House of Commons, and moved a vote of confidence in itself. They secured an overwhelming majority of votes (the minority numbered five) and Mr. Churchill's final speech secured for him an ovation from members whose tendency to mass hysteria, as shown in the Munich debate, was once more manifested. Was it an overwhelming victory? Within two days even the Government Press in its comment on the Premier's speech, was discovering the emptiness of content that lay beneath its flowers of rhetoric. It is therefore necessary to analyse the real position of the Government following this debate.

The M.P.s who voted for Tory-Liberal-Labour Coalition were as uneasy about it as could be. They resembled the inhabitants of a building which has not yet been officially declared uninhabitable, and who do the best they can to continue it as a dwelling, though they never know when it may tumble about their ears. The confidence vote was an attempt to shore it up.

The situation is very different from that of a year ago when they blithely got rid of Chamberlain knowing there was a better card in the pack, because they could turn to Churchill and the formation of the Coalition. But now the usual Cabinet re-arrangement, the time honoured resort of both French and British political parties in moments of difficulty, is no longer possible; for in their heart of hearts they are aware that they can no longer re-shuffle these very dog-eared cards, since there is only one ace in the pack. That there is wide-spread dissatisfaction there can be no doubt; and perhaps as many as a third of those who voted for the Government felt no confidence in it, and would indeed have preferred to vote against it had there been within their limited field of vision any practical alternative.

The situation may be likened to that of a Suburban middle-class family whose slender resources now permit them to have only one domestic servant, their "General." She is the person that everyone looks to and on whom everything rests, but she arouses universal dissatisfaction in the family; for she breaks the crockery, everything comes to pieces in her hand and, finally, she cannot cook; all her efforts at roasting are either blood or tears. These people have never known any problem other than the "servant problem." In their parlour they hold a parley about this problem, but all their misgivings are swept away by the mistress of the house, who says, "If we do sack her, we shall never get another maid." This painful situation in the middle-class parlour was repeated last month in the middle-class Parliament.

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The dissatisfaction of Parliament is small compared to that of public opinion, which is well ahead of the present House of Commons, and knows that there is a very considerable basis for this dissatisfaction. The series of military reverses have caused a great disquiet. Even more anxiety is evoked by the operation of this Government's foreign policy. Its war aims are mainly hidden, but whatever of them peeps out is provenly reactionary. They appear to be fostering, as the alternative to Hitler and Nazism in Germany, a capitalist Germany ruled by men of the type of Rauschning and Otto Strasser. These ex-Nazis and others of similar type in the other European countries are apparently regarded as suitable candidates for the type of post-war Government that the British Government would support. The continued hostility to the U.S.S.R. and the ill-disguised efforts to embroil it in a struggle with Nazi Germany are the foreign policy not merely of the Government, but more especially of the whole ruling class, a section of which appears to hope that by these means a deal could be done with Hitler and the Nazis and an Anglo-German peace negotiated with a view to a joint war against the Soviet Union. Finally, the refusal of independence to India and the growing suppression of popular movements in that country are in most glaring contrast to the professed aims of a struggle for freedom against tyranny, of democracy against autocratic rule, of the liberation of subjugated and oppressed nationalities.

Dissatisfaction in the home policy of the British Government is found in nearly every field. The disorganisation of production and economy (now expressed by the big industrialists themselves and by the *Times*, which, however, proposes as a remedy the supercession of local authorities), the widespread profiteering, the scandal of A.R.P. and food supplies, waste of man-power, have all aroused increasing dissatisfaction.

The official parties in Parliament see no alternative to Churchill; and this is their real failure, that they do not see the forces of the people in the country. The working class movement is becoming more and more dissatisfied, but this movement was not voiced at all in the debate. An amendment moved by myself and Mr. Gallacher was not taken, indeed no amendments were taken, nor was there an opportunity to speak in the discussion. The result was something that every member of the Labour Party and of the Co-Operative Party should take very seriously to heart, that the undoubted widespread dissatisfaction was not voiced. In fact the running in that debate was made chiefly by Mr. Lloyd George and the "National Liberal" Tory, Mr. Hore-Belisha. It might have been a debate held during the Boer War as far as any effective expression of working-class opinion was concerned.

Yet the working-class, as everyone knows, is the national driving force which can play and must play the biggest rôle in the future. Comments after the debate were noticeable enough. The Tory-Liberal-Labour Coalition and its whole wide-spread machinery, which confines and regiments opinion, and suppresses criticism, has destroyed the customary forms of expression, and then, if you please, commentators express astonishment at the extraordinary "vacuum" in the atmosphere! It is really an odd situation, that a Government with so many faults should

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continue to exist only because there is not yet clear enough to the vast majority the type of alternative. But there is an alternative possible, which the movement of the People's Convention has come into being to realise. It is clear that the only way out of this present very serious situation is for the working class to end the policy of "Coalition," and to take the leading rôle in building a powerful independent popular opposition capable of winning widespread support from all sections of the mass of the people. On that basis there could be established a Government that would carry out immediately the obviously necessary measures. What are these necessary measures?

First there is the whole situation in production, the inability of the present Government to increase the home production of food because it dare not touch the privileges of the Landlords, together with the chaotic situation which even the newspapers report from time to time as existing in factories*; and of which vast numbers of workers have daily experience.

Secondly, there is the necessity for a radical change in foreign policy which would include an entirely different orientation towards the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the Republic of China and the Peoples of India.

Thirdly, amid the worsening situation of this Spring and Summer, new hope can only be built upon a Government which shows it is able to lead the way and bring the British people out of this present crisis.

It is on these urgent and immediate issues that action is required, but no such action will be taken until the Coalition is ended by the building of a powerful independent opposition. This is the main task before the mass of the people of this country.

Those who still cherish the illusion that they may get something from the Labour Party under its present leadership instead of turning to the People's Convention movement, would do well to study the declarations of the Labour Party's National Executive to be submitted to the forthcoming annual conference in London.

There they will of course read of no change in the decision already taken to suppress the voice of the local Labour Parties by refusing to allow any resolutions to be proposed. On the other hand they will find that the National Executive itself has sought to find an answer to the dissatisfaction by painting a picture of a beautiful world that is unknown

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* In the *Daily Telegraph* of 17th May, Mr. A. H. Brockhurst, a managaing director of a firm engaged exclusively since the beginning of the war on the production of munitions, records his protest against "The whole national policy which still seeks to reach maximum output of war supplies without seriously interfering with the competitive, individual and profit-making basis of our industrial system." He says in so many words:

> "My firm desires only to produce and to keep on producing, but we are daily forced to do things which are contrary to the public interest and to omit doing things which would be in the public interest, because the system imposes upon us, as a first consideration, the need for making our own living, insuring our future, and securing our financial stability."

The facts referred to are common knowledge: and it is only their *public* expression by a managing director that is less common.

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to ordinary people and is certainly not to be found in this island at the moment. Last year at Bournemouth, on the eve of their entry into the Churchill Government, they made extensive promises of Socialism, not only after the war, but even during the war and rightaway. It must have been an awkward problem for my former colleagues to think out an answer to the question, "what about this Socialism you promised?" In the end they decided to grapple boldly with it by the simple declaration that there was socialism now, and that they had therefore fulfilled their promises. Under the heading, "The Peace, prepare now," they assert the necessity to transfer to peace-time the solutions of war-time. They say, "As we prevent profiteering in war, so we can prevent it in peace." The miners and the railwaymen, the engineers and the munition workers, workers in transport of all kinds, the agricultural labourers and the textile operatives may well ponder this claim that the National Executive of the Labour Party has prevented profiteering. The housewives can look to their own experiences and so can everyone else. But they go on to say, "As we prevent exploitation in war, so also can we prevent it in peace." It would seem Milton's words indeed have come true: that "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war" and, it may be added, "no less imaginary."

They actually go on to say, "We reaffirm the principles of our socialist faith . . . . . we are bound to insist that just as they are the basis of triumph in the war, so they are also the condition of unity in peace." So it is on the basis of socialism that Mr. Churchill and Sir Andrew Duncan and new Baron Leathers and Mr. Amery are conducting the war. That is interesting enough: an even more interesting illusion is that the three years unity of classes of the post war period, to which both Mr. Churchill and the Labour leaders have referred, is to be conducted as a socialist unity. This appears to mean that Mr. Churchill and the leaders of the Tory party, the big industrialists, the capitalist opponents of socialism, the bankers, the stockbrokers and all the others of the ruling class are going to be socialists. Truly it is a beautiful picture.

Do the leaders of the Labour Party believe that this farrago of unrealities is going to be accepted in the working class movement or treated as the voice of the people? I do not believe it for a moment. But in order that the real voice of the people shall be heard it is necessary that from the workshops and the mines, from the Trade Union branches and the Co-Operative organisations, from all the groupings and associations of the wider mass of the people, there shall come not only the repudiation of this false leadership, but insistent demands to meet the crying needs of the people. And that demand to be effective has to be expressed in the building of wide, popular and powerful opposition, for which the People's Convention has shown the way.

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INDIA—A Call to the British People

BY HARRY POLLITT

IN NO ASPECT of its policy does the Churchill Government reveal such downright incompetence and stupidity, even from the point of view of its own imperialist interests, as in its handling of the Indian question. The recent speech of Mr. Amery has quite rightly set Indian public opinion aflame with indignation that such crude Brummagem Brass methods should be thought good enough to try out once again on the Indian people. For centuries the historic policy in foreign affairs, particularly of British Imperialism, has been that of "Divide and Rule." The diehard Tories especially thought they had brought this policy to such a fine art that no one would ever be able to see through their supposed cleverness. But this time Amery has overdone it; and sections of opinion of the most moderate character in India have been shocked out of their illusions by the blatant pursuit of this policy at the present time.

It is clear to every one that British Imperialism is in a desperate situation in the conduct of the war against its trade rival, Nazi Germany. One might have thought that this would have prompted a more discreet and delicate handling of the Indian situation. But the Tories learn nothing and forget nothing when it comes to dealing with what they still look upon as a subject people. Incidentally they bring the same mentality to bear on their outlook on the Soviet Union, with all the consequences that this too has brought in its train. So we get the spectacle of the most notorious Imperialist in the Tory Party being placed in charge of India on behalf of the Churchill Government. Naturally such an appointment did not tend to create in India any impression that this war was in any way different from previous imperialist struggles.

The Indian people know only too well that the claim to fight for freedom and democracy is all very well as a means of deceiving peoples as to the real motives of war. But it cannot deceive them; because, strange as it may appear, the Indians believe that the test of this is how far you are prepared to apply it in those countries where you have the power to do so immediately. The Indian people have not been blind to the propaganda which declares "that when Britain has won the war, then freedom will be restored to Belgium, Holland, Poland, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, etc."; nor are they blind to the fact that the Churchill Government which sponsors this type of propaganda and uses the B.B.C. and the R.A.F. for the purpose of appeals to the people of those countries to revolt against Nazism, itself suppresses with an iron hand any attempt on the part of Indians to try and realise their aims of independence and their right to govern their own country in the way they conceive best in the

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interests of the Indian people. *Such hypocrisy stinks to the heavens. It exposes the shameless character of British imperialist propraganda.*

The Indian people have not forgotten the promises made to them in the last war, nor how shamefully these same promises were betrayed when the war was over. They do not intend to be deceived again. They are fighting now for their right of independence. Because of this the flower of the Congress Nationalist leaders and of the working class and peasant leaders are ruthlessly placed in concentration camps. We are proud to note that all these methods of intimidation completely fail to damp down the struggle of the Indian people. Indeed, we would be happy to see in Britain as great a struggle on the part of the British people in defence of their own democratic rights as the Indian people are making for theirs.

I write these few lines on the evening of May 11th. This morning I walked from Old Street Tube station to a Poplar shipyard after the great blitz. Everywhere great fires, destroyed buildings, homeless people, for miles walked on glass. I could not help thinking of how the Amerys are always declaring the people of India are not yet fit to be trusted with the government of their own country—when this is the state of affairs in London and Berlin after centuries of so-called government by the cultured Christian capitalist ruling classes.

I say to those who read this. As the days pass, more and more the British people will find out how heavy is the price they are going to pay for our betrayal of the heroic struggle of the Spanish people from 1936 to 1939. Be on guard now, lest we are called upon to pay an even bitterer price for our betrayal of the struggle of the Indian people in their just fight for their independence.

More and more as this war extends will we find how isolated Britain becomes as the result of this policy of betrayal of democracy and freedom, and the policy of imperialist domination. We can, however, fight against this if we will. Every day brings new evidence of the bankruptcy of the Churchill Government. Just as the chaos and sabotage of production by the big monopoly interests in Britain itself cry aloud for redress, so do the fiascos of Eden and Amery in the realm of foreign policy. Now as never before the British people must be told the truth of how desperate is the situation that the Tory-Labour Coalition Government has placed them in. They must fight against it. And in so doing they must see that the demand for the right of the Indian people to their independence forms as much an integral part of their struggles as for example their own demands in regard to wages and food.

For it is a common struggle we are all engaged in, against a common enemy; and we should be proud to find ourselves fighting alongside such gallant and courageous fighters as the Indian people. The demand that Amery be sacked should find expression throughout Britain. This Tory die-hard, this Brummagem Imperialist, this old crusted representative of everything that is decadent and repressive in British politics is a positive menace, not only to the people of Britain, but to the people of India as well. Do not let it be said that it was only a storm in India that led to his removal: let the British people also help fan the storm waves that will

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send him into the same sort of retirement as Baldwin and his like.

We salute the Indian people, we hope the mighty wave of revolt that is now sweeping that great country will succeed in finding the road to the complete victory over British imperialism, and that the Indian people will not be fobbed off by any in their own ranks who may grow afraid as the struggle reaches a higher stage. For the winning of freedom for India means the winning of freedom too for the people of Britain.

A Special Article on

"The Situation in India"

by V. K. Krishna Menon

Will appear in our JULY ISSUE

LABOUR MONTHLY DEVELOPMENT FUND

Donations received in May, 1941

£56 : 9 : 7

TOTAL collected during the year 1941: £270. 17. 8.

One of the nicest letters we had this month came from a Guarantor who, realising that he had sadly lapsed with his guarantee, paid us for four months, plus interest which would rejoice a moneylender's heart. It certainly rejoiced ours. We specially like his understatement: "One is glad of the LABOUR MONTHLY in the midst of so much 'information.'"

Next month is our twentieth birthday: you will read about the celebrations we propose to hold on 19th July in the June number. All those of you who live anywhere near London or a local Discussion Group will, of course, come and make merry with us. But ALL of you, wherever you live, will be sending us large and handsome birthday presents. Please make a special note NOW to earmark some of that overtime for us. If you are in the army, we know you can't spare much, but let us have it, however small it is. You know we're going to spend it in the right way.

Anon, Gosport, 3s.; J. W. Porter (G), 2s. 6d.; A. S. Walker, 8s. 6d.; McNought, 2s. 6d.; Bristol East C.P. (G), 5s.; A. Maisel, 3s. 6d.; W.H.J., 2s.; E. Upward, 3s. 3d.; H. Lupton, 5s.; A. D. Margolis, 1s.; Otto, 1s. 3d.; H. Levitt, 12s.; Tom Short, 1s.; Harpenden Disc. Gr., £1; Anon, W.8, £10; N. Finchley Disc. Gr., 6s.; "E." (G), 2s. 6d.; A.G., 3s.; E. Catlow, 2s. 6d.; I. Schloss, 12s. 6d.; Church of England, 2s. 6d.; R.H.M., 19s. 6d.; H. H. Jones, 2s. 6d.; L. Herbert, 16s.; A. L. Wedlake, 3s.; A. B. Edwards, 3s.; J.B., Chelmsford (G), 5s.; Red West End Shelterers, 4s. 6d.; W. J. Hammond, 8s. 6d.; Red Infantry Men, 8s.; Q.Z. (G), 4s.; J.B., Nantymoel (G), 5s.; S. Bright, 3s.; A. M. Mardiros, 6s.; G. E. Clayton, 2s. 6d.; Bro. John Mason, 5s.; A.H., 1s. 3d.; "B." 2s. 6d.; Red N.C.O. (G), 2s. 6d.; Anon, Whitchurch, 1s.; Learner, 2s. 6d.; Wallington Disc. Gr., 5s.; Windsorians, 5s.; Q., Manchester (G), 5s.; Skegg (G), 2s.; C. L. Watson, 12s. 6d.; D. W. S. Daniels, 1s. 3d.; G. Crawford, 2s.; Highgate Disc. Gr. (G), 10s.; Faithful Readers, £1; May James, 2s. 6d.; Bermondsey Group (G), 10s.; Soldier Comrade (G), 10s.; P.A.T., 5s.; E.P. (G), £1; Cradle Group, 6s. 3d.; M.E.B. (G), 2s.; C. W. Hartles, 6s.; R.F.B. (G), £2; Orpington Disc. Gr., 3s. 6d.; Gunn (G), 10s. 6d.; Bolshevik Tank Driver (2), 5s. 3d.; H.A.R.D. (G), 2s. 6d.; N. and E. Lipton (G), 2s. 6d.; Mary Merrall, 6s.; F.B., £2 10s.; Grantham Disc. Gr., 6s. 3d.; A. Leathley, 2s. 6d.; W. F. Lakin-Smith (G), 4s.; G. Andrews, 17s. 6d.; R.R., N.W.3 (G), £1; M. J. Carritt (G), £1; A.V. (G), 2s.; R.R., N.W.11 (G), 10s.; Nelson, £1 10s.; Another Red N.C.O. (G), 3s. 6d.; Red Solicitor, 8s.; A. J. French, 2s. 6d.; R. D. Manning, 5s.; A Few Dartmouth Socialists, 10s.; C.V.E., 2s.; N. Kelly (G), 5s.; B. C. Vickery, 1s. 7d.; J. F. Buchanan, 1s.; Anon, Somerset, 5s.; Margaret, Ivor and Kenneth, 6s. 6d.; Mrs. A. W. and C. Barrows, 2s.; E.N.M., 3s. 10d.; M.C., Ayr (G), 6s. 6d.; Radical Teacher, 10s.; Cabby (G), £1; A. Friend, W.4, £2 10s.; J. B. Pratt (G), £3; Red Cire, 1s.; A Herts Reader, 16s.; Gruzya Uchitiellya (G), £1; Welwyn G. City Disc. Gr. (G), £1 10s.; A.H., 10s. 3d.; Royston Green, 4s. 6d.; T. Matthews, 8s. 6d.; P. Knight, 2s. 6d.; C. B. Tidy, 1s.; A. J. Miller, 1s.; W. Gillham (G), 2s. 6d.; H. Downing, 10s.; Stratford-on-Avon Readers (G), 5s.; A. G. Coates, 2s. 6d.; H.S., Rodley (G), 2s.; Woodford Disc. Gr., 5s.; A.R.M. (G), 5s.; R.I.C., Ches. (2G), 5s.; Red Corporal (G), 10s.; Bacon Family (G), 3s.; E. Dunstan, 6s.; Enfield Group (G), 7s. 6d.; Mary Christopher (G), 3s. 6d.; Red N.C.O. (G) (Per J.R.C.), 3s. 6d.

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Dialectical Materialism and Modern Science

I.—Everything has a History

By J. B. S. HALDANE, F.R.S.

IN the series of articles of which this is the first, I propose to examine the question of how far the scientific discoveries of the generation which has elapsed since Lenin wrote *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* have verified the principles of dialectical materialism. These principles were formulated by Marx, and in much greater detail by Engels, and developed by Lenin and Stalin. "Nature," wrote Engels[1], "is the test of dialectics," and dialectical materialism can only be accepted if it proves a guide not merely to an understanding of the development of science, but also to actual scientific research.

Its opponents say that it is a dogma to which scientific publications in the Soviet Union must conform, as scientific publications in mediaeval Europe had to conform to the current theology. But dialectical materialism does not state the nature of matter. "For the sole property of matter," wrote Lenin[2], "with the recognition of which materialism is vitally concerned, is the property of being objective reality, of existing outside of our cognition." It states that matter is in a constant state of flux, that development occurs through a struggle of opposites, and so on, but it does not lay down where in nature such struggles are to be found. It merely prompts us to look for them, and helps us to understand them when discovered.

A certain number of scientists today are idealists, partly because our knowledge of cerebral physiology does not yet permit of a detailed theory of mind, but largely because it is abundantly clear that matter does not have the properties which were ascribed to it a generation ago by the majority of scientists, though not, of course, by dialectical materialists. Hence the idealists conclude that matter does not exist. This conclusion is, of course, very welcome in reactionary circles. If matter is defined as consisting of indestructible atoms it certainly does not exist. But 33 years ago Lenin wrote "The recognition of immutable elements, of the immutable substance of things, is not materialism, but is metaphysical, anti-dialectical materialism." We shall see what has happened to the supposedly immutable atoms of nineteenth century science.

After Mendeleyev had formulated the periodic law, chemists gradually discovered new elements until today all but one of the 92 elements between and including hydrogen, the lightest, and uranium, the heaviest, are known, and one or two heavier than uranium are suspected. Aston found that these elements are mixtures of atoms of slightly different weights. In fact there are not 92, but several hundred kinds of stable (or more accurately nearly stable) atom, each atom consisting of a heavy nucleus round which

1. Anti-Dühring. 2. Materialism and Empirio-criticism.

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from 1 to 92 much lighter electrons revolve. Rutherford showed that some naturally occuring atomic nuclei are unstable, and break down to yield lighter types of atom. But till recently these could be regarded as exceptions. In the last ten years, however, most of the elements have been bombarded with particles of high velocity, produced either by naturally radio-active substances or by the very intense electric fields, ranging to millions of volts, which modern developments of electrical industry have made possible. Such bombardments produce new types of unstable atomic nucleus. These are being discovered at such a rate that already probably more different kinds of unstable than of stable atom are known. The atoms of ordinary chemistry are only the survivors of a much greater number of less stable types, and even the stablest of them can be altered, and are constantly being altered, by cosmic radiation and other agents, though extremely slowly on our earth. But such processes must be relatively rapid in the interior of the sun and other stars, and act as the main source of their light and heat.

An atomic nucleus may be considered as built up of lighter particles such as protons, neutrons, and electrons. These particles can be studied, and their properties determined, and physicists naturally tended to regard them as "immutable elements" once the atom had proved not to be immutable. But they soon proved not to be immutable either. For example there are electrons of positive as well as negative electric charge. They do not last long, for when a positive and negative electron collide, they pass over into a flash of high frequency radiation. And under certain circumstances radiation may generate a pair of electrons of opposite charges. "Contrary to metaphysics," wrote Stalin[3], "dialectic holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away." This view is completely borne out by modern physics, provided we realize that there is an immense range of different stabilities. The most transitory known objects, such as the particle called the meson, have an expectation of life of less than a millionth of a second. The stablest, such as the nuclei of ordinary atoms under terrestrial, though not solar, conditions, have an expectation of many thousand million years.

It may be answered that at least the laws of nature are stable, and that here at any rate immutability can be found. If so it is fairly clear that the universe is "running down," as Clausius believed, towards a condition of "heat death" in which the heat is evenly distributed, and that it cannot have existed forever in the past. Thus a creation, or at any rate some breach of natural law in the past, must be postulated; and we are back at essentially the Newtonian theology, where the creator established eternal laws and leaves the universe to work out its own destiny. This fits in very well with the ideology of a bourgeoisie which realizes that there was a pre-capitalist period, but believes that the laws of capitalist economics are eternal.

Engels did not completely escape from this difficulty. He saw that

3. History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)

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thermodynamics, as formulated in his day, was self-contradictory, for the laws then given could not have held for ever. So he speculated concerning a building up of the lost heat of the stars into motion somewhere in the depths of space, which would allow the origin of new solar systems when our own has become cold. Thus eternity would be filled by cycles of more or less similar events, and the universe as a whole would have no history, being of the same general character as at present a million million years in the future or the past.

But some modern mathematical physicists, notably Lemaitre, Dirac, and Milne, take a different view, according to which laws of nature change, and the general character of the universe therefore alters, though, of course, very slowly. Milne's cosmology is the most fully developed of these, and the most dialectical. Our sun is one star out of perhaps a million million in a system whose densest parts we see as the Milky Way. We shall deal with the development of stars in a later article. Hundreds of thousands of other galaxies are known. The more distant they are the redder their light. This may be interpreted as due to their moving away, or to the speeding up of atomic events, so that light which started a hundred million years ago is of lower frequency, and therefore redder, than light which starts from similar atoms to-day. Each interpretation demands a different time scale and a different geometry. On the scattering or "expanding universe" interpretation light frequencies and rates of chemical change are constant. But everything, including material objects, is expanding by about one two-thousand millionth part per year; and two thousand million years ago all matter was packed into an indefinitely small volume, and ordinary physical events, such as the rotation of the earth, took place in an indefinitely short time. On the other interpretation there is no expansion, and no slowing down of physical events. However geometry is not Euclidean. The two interpretations are not different theories of the universe, but different systems of measurement. The latter is by far the more natural, as it takes ordinary standards such as the the metre and the year, as constant, or very nearly so.

On this interpretation the past and the future are infinite, but in the remote past, say fifteen hundred million years ago, chemical processes were so slow relative to physical that life as we know it was impossible, and the sun and other stars probably produced less heat than to-day, while in the remote future chemical processes will be so relatively speeded up as to render life still possible even if there is a marked fall in temperature. Milne points out that this development, this qualititative change in the nature of things, is due to the contradictions between the time scale on which radiation proceeds evenly, and that on which the movement of masses is an even process. No doubt this is not a final account of the matter. Milne's theory accords with Einstein's special theory of relativity, but not with his later general theory, some features of which have been verified by observation. Probably later workers will be able to combine the useful features of both Milne's and Einstein's theories. It is of great interest to find that a natural philosopher who is probably almost uninfluenced by Marxism should ascribe the qualitative development of the universe to the struggle between the wave-like and particle-like characteristics which are present in all matter. To this unity of opposites we shall turn in the next article.

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Food: What Could Be Done

BY GEORGE MATTHEWS

CAPITALISM has not only reduced agriculture in Britain to a state of chaos and decay: it has also instilled deep into the minds of the people the belief that the earth of their country is only capable of producing a miserable fraction of the food they need. Consequently, in the midst of the food shortage brought by imperialist war, the ruling class is able to get away with its soon out-dated slogans of "Bardia or Beef," its excuses of "lack of shipping space," and its continued criminal neglect of the resources of British agriculture. If the true facts about the potentialities of home production were brought before every man and woman who is to-day going short of eggs or milk or sugar there would be a tremendous uprising against the ruling class, which is neither willing nor able to do what could be done.

What are the facts? Half of the land is not being used as it should be ($16\frac{1}{4}$ million acres neglected), improving methods of cultivation are not applied, while instead of the doubling of production that was immediately possible all the much advertised war-time measures have brought about an increase in 1940 of one-and-a-half per cent.*

These facts can be demonstrated if we take a number of technical measures and calculate what increase in the production of a few of the more important commodities their application would bring. The most important of these technical measures are the ploughing-up of grassland and the reclamation of derelict land. Arable land will produce at least three or four times (and up to fifteen times) as much human food per acre as even the best grassland. Grassland ploughed up and re-sown to grass after proper fertilising, draining and liming, will produce three to four times as much cattle food per acre as old worn-out grass. There are millions of acres of extremely poor grassland in this country. In July,

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* The authority for this 1½% is "The Dairy Farmer." Mr. Lloyd George, quoting secures sufficietn for good health. Thanks to science and technical skill, we doubling of the produce of the land as generally accepted ("I have not met an expert who did not agree") and on the percentage increase challenged the Government to give the real figures, if his were inaccurate. No reply was forthcoming. The Government put up Tom Williams, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (with the Duke of Norfolk!) and the Labour Party's "expert" on agriculture, to reply to Lloyd George. Did he remember the words of a Labour Party pamphlet published in 1937, called "Labour Policy of Food for All (!!)"? "The Labour Party believes that production and distribution of food ought to be so organised that every human being secures sufficient for good health. Thanks to science and technical skill, we can now produce all we require . . . Abundance is at our doors. Yet amid that abundance, alas, hundreds of thousands of poor children cry for the food that is being withheld from them or destroyed because their fathers and mothers cannot afford to buy." Alas, indeed, for the Labour leaders, who now perpetuate the situation they formerly condemned.

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1936, Sir George Stapledon, one of the foremost agricultural scientists in Britain said:—

> "In round numbers we have 16½ million acres of land in a more or less neglected condition, and much of it absolutely derelict: every single acre of this enormous area (*no less than 43 per cent. of the land surface of England and Wales*) is capable of radical improvement."

This is the pass to which capitalism had brought agriculture before the present war. In the twenty-one months that have elapsed since the beginning of the war *only one-fifth* (under 3½ million acres) of Stapledon's 16¼ million have been ploughed up under the Government scheme. Of this more later. There remain about 12½ million acres "capable of radical improvement." If we ploughed up five million acres of this, and sowed it down to arable crops, *we could double our production of wheat*: that is, we could produce about 45 per cent. of the wheat we need, as compared with the 22 per cent. we produced before the war.* At the same time a great deal of other kinds of human food and extra animal food could be produced from this new acreage of land. A typical rotation would be: Three crops of wheat or other cereal, one of animal fodder crops or vegetables, and one of sugar-beet or potatoes, in every four years. This would mean that we could increase the acreage of sugar-beet by 640,000 acres, *and thus produce at home all the sugar we used to consume before the war.* In addition, large quantities of sugar-beet pulp and tops would be produced for animal feeding. We could also add 400,000 acres to our vegetable and fruit acreage, *and thus raise the production of vegetables by 60 per cent. and of fruit by 75 per cent.* We could increase the production of potatoes by 50 per cent. above the present level.

We should still have 7½ million acres of grassland left. This could be enormously improved either by surface cultivations, draining, liming and fertilising, or by ploughing up and re-seeding with an improved grass-seeds mixture. Sir Daniel Hall and Lord Addison, in the book cited above, have calculated that from this improved 7½ million acres of grassland *the increased milk production would be 925,000,000 gallons, or nearly 100 per cent. increase.* This increase could be utilised in several ways. A possible allocation would be:—

An increase in MILK FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION of 50 per cent. (350 million gallons).

An increase in CHEESE of 200 per cent., i.e., *sufficient to meet the whole of our pre-war requirements* (280 million gallons).

An increase in BUTTER of 10 per cent. (295 million gallons).

We have only touched the fringe of the possibilities. From the use of one fertiliser alone (Sulphate of Ammonia) it has been recently calculated (*Fertiliser Policy in Wartime*, Rothamsted Experimental Station) that a 5 per cent. increase in yield could be obtained from our pre-war arable acreage. There are also millions of acres of land which are in the most urgent need of lime, being too acid to grow good crops. Professor Robinson has recently estimated that *in Wales alone* no less than two million tons of lime are needed on the land. What Lord Addison describes as a "prodigious acreage" of land is in urgent need of drainage: millions of acres are so water-logged as to be producing only a fraction of what they

* Calculated by Lord Addison in "A Policy for British Agriculture."

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could if they were drained. About £20,000,000 worth of food is lost to the nation annually because of livestock disease. *Yet the amount spent by the State on agricultural research of all kinds, whether concerned with fertilisers, diseases or plant-breeding, was £170,000 per year in 1938*, and is probably little greater now. Even Mr. Hudson had to say on April 3rd: "The position is not satisfactory."

Now take eggs. The excuse for the egg shortage is that feeding stuffs have had to be cut down owing to lack of shipping space. But the Scientific Poultry Breeders' Association has recently calculated that there is sufficient waste food, if efficiently collected and supplemented with a small cereal and protein ration, to maintain about 52,000,000 hens, or two-thirds of our pre-war poultry population. An increased head of poultry on general farms, where they can live almost entirely on the waste products of the farm, is also practicable. *We could, in fact, probably maintain our pre-war poultry population, which produced 60 per cent. of our requirements in peacetime*, without drawing largely on shipping space.

Finally, there is the question of meat. A strong case can be made out for the maintenance of our cattle and sheep population: first because they can be fed largely on home-grown feeding stuffs and by-products not suitable for human consumption; secondly, because they contribute very largely by the production of dung to maintaining the fertility of the soil in a way which artificial fertilisers alone cannot do. If all the measures already described were put into effect there is little doubt that we could maintain the cattle and sheep population and thus produce 50 per cent. of our pre-war consumption of beef and mutton.

These are some of the things that could be done. They would result in a greatly increased supply of many of the most important of the protective and energy-producing foods. They would place no burden on shipping. There is no conceivable excuse for them not being done to-day.

But there is a reason for the staggering contrast between what could be done and what is being done. When we examine closely the policy of the Government we shall find that in every single case it is a *class policy*, which ruins the small farmers, worsens the conditions of the farm workers, and puts the interests of the big distributors, banks, landlords and manufacturers before the production of food. Why has not more land been ploughed up?* It is not only the inertia, as well as class prejudice, of the County War Agricultural Committees responsible for the ploughing-up orders. The more important reason is the fact that millions of acres of the land needing to be ploughed and re-claimed are in the hands of those who have not the capital or the desire to undertake the work of

* Even the Tory Lord Winterton voices the scandal: "What an astonishing thing it is that after nineteen months of war you should still see in this country, within 50 miles of this capital city of the Empire, more unused farming land than you could see in any similar tract of land in any Western European country. I would like to know the answer to the question of deer versus ordinary farming practice. Private individuals and public authorities should not be able to keep deer and have as much meat as they want; deer should be in the meat ration. On the one hand you have small farmers at their wit's end how to carry on the grass crop even in summer, and who have been ploughing up land. Next to this sort of land you may see an enormous park with nothing but deer." (House of Commons, April 3rd: Reported in "Farmers Weekly.")

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reclamation. The amount of work actually being carried on by the State is negligible compared with the size of the problem (116,257 acres, according to the Government). Of this problem, Lloyd George says:

> "They're not touched (the derelict areas). Why? Because they could only be cultivated if the State took them over. But, you see, the reactionaries don't want to do that. They are afraid of anything that would offend the traditions of land ownership, of anything that looks like handing the control of the land to the nation." (*Reynolds News*, April 13th).

Even the land that has been ploughed has in hundreds of cases produced extremely poor crops.* Why? In ninety per cent. of cases because of the lack of capital of the smaller farmers. The changeover from grass to arable farming necessitates new implements, more fertilisers, expensive seeds, draining and liming. These were and are beyond the capacity of the small man with little capital. So is the expenditure of large sums on the new buildings, fences and water supply which Sir George Stapledon describes as essential. The Government claims that the capital is there (in the banks!) and that the banks are only too anxious to finance small farmers. But the banks demand, first, 5 per cent. on their money; and second, very adequate security. Most small farmers, in debt and mortgaged up to the hilt for the last twenty years, stand no chance whatever of getting adequate advances from the banks.

A further factor is the compulsory subsidy to the Church, called Tithe, which many farmers have to pay. Referring to the fact that in Suffolk 200 farmers had been dispossessed of their land by the County War Agricultural Committee as "bad cultivators," the chairman of the National Tithepayers' Association (Mrs. R. H. Rash) said that "tithes were to blame for the dismissed farmers' failure to reach maximum production, and were threatening the success of the "grow more food" drive." The Minister of Agriculture refused to meet a deputation of tithepayers (*Times*, May 5th).

The feeding stuffs position presents a similar picture. The Sixth Report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure states that all opportunities for making full use of waste products for pig and poultry feeding are not being taken, and that the matter demands investigation. That is putting it mildly. Only a small fraction of the available waste food is being utilised, and the scale on which it is wasted was shown:—

> "When Alfred Blandford, a farmer, of Thornicombe, near Blandford, was at Blandford yesterday fined £40 for unlawfully possessing regimental stores and property, it was stated that a pig swill which came from a billet contained 200 loaves, 30 to 40 legs of lamb, tinned salmon, corned beef, tinned jam, and spoons and plates." (*Times*, 25th April).

The Government, however, has raised the price of feeding stuffs by from 70 to 150 per cent. since the war began. It is thus not surprising that milk production has dropped, while British Oil and Cake Mills have just declared a record profit of £859,403 (presumably on a decreased

* Sir Harry Goschen stated in a speech to the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation that by far the larger part of last year's 2,000,000 newly ploughed acres had been sown down to cereals, and had produced about 1 million extra tons of grain. This is a poor yield, much below the average (itself very low) for Britain in previous years.

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quantity of supplies), and Ranks and Spillers have declared dividends of 18 per cen. and 15 per cent. respectively.* The latest news is that drastic reductions in the cattle population are to be imposed, beginning with 20 per cent. reduction of beef cattle, and 5 per cent. of dairy cows; on which the *Times* comments: "The interference with the normal course of farming operations may reduce the food output throughout the year."

As for Fertilisers, the main contribution of the Government has again been to raise the price. Then the Minister of Agriculture says on April 3rd, of Sulphate of Ammonia, that "Supplies are in excess of demand. The response to the appeals to use more Nitrogen have been very disappointing." Why? Because the price has been raised by 30 per cent. since the war began. This home-produced fertiliser, made by fixing nitrogen from the air, is largely controlled by Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. When "supplies are in excess of demand" under capitalism the price is supposed to fall. In this case the Government has intervened in favour of I.C.I. to raise it. There could be no clearer example of its class policy.**

When the Government deals with distribution it pursues a similar policy. Last year enormous quantities of vegetables were wasted and ploughed back. Waste goes on in Covent Garden Market. The Government's "solution" is the setting up of a National Vegetable Marketing Company, with the chairman of the Conservative 1932 Committee and the head of one of the largest firms in Covent Garden Market as its chairman and managing director respectively. The Government is careful to make clear that it intends to maintain the existing distributive system more or less intact, employing the multitudinous middlemen and dealers as its agents, and guaranteeing them their profits.

There is a final aspect of Government policy to be dealt with. Lord Addison wrote: "The employment of more men under good and attractive conditions on the land is inseparable from the increased production of food and better cultivation of the land." The war has actually worsened the conditions of the farm workers. The wage increases granted have been swallowed up by the rise in the cost of living. Men are forbidden to leave the industry at a time when they could earn far more in other employment. Rents have often been raised. The tied cottage system continues. New rural housing has been completely stopped, in spite of the enormous influx of evacuees from the towns. Health and other Social Services have often been cut down. The food shortage affects workers in the countryside as well as in the towns. Under these conditions maximum efficiency is impossible.

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* B.O. and C.M. is a Unilever subsidiary. The Minister of Agriculture has family connections with the Unilevers. The chairman of B.O. and C.M. is controller of Oils and fats at the Ministry of Food. There are at least three other former Unilever directors there. So is J. V. Rank, who is now Controller of Cereals and Flour.

** Compare this with what happens under Socialism: in Lithuania "the fact that the prices of mineral fertilisers have been fixed at levels considerably below those of recent years make possible the application of mineral fertilisers by broad sections of the working peasantry who hardly ever used them under capitalism. Thus the crop yield will be increased. Under capitalism, 82,000 tons of fertiliser went mainly to the big estates. This year, 176,000 tons will go to the working peasants." (*World News and Views*, May 3rd, 1941).

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These, then, are some of the reasons for the scandalous fact that in spite of the possibility of a 100 per cent. increase, home production has actually increased by only 1½ per cent. There are others. They all have the same basis: the Government is not really concerned with providing the people with food. It is concerned with cutting consumption to the bone, both now and after the war. Even where it has made some show (and the show usually consists of putting advertisements into the Press) of trying to produce more food it has subordinated production to the interests of the banks, the landowners and the monopolists.

The working class and progressive movement must expose this policy. It must put forward its own programme for increasing home production. These are some of the things which must be done:—

A National Plan for the full utilisation of the land of Britain, in order to produce the quantities and the kinds of food we need, to be put into operation; based on the ploughing up and reclamation, as soon as practicable, of 12½ million acres of poor grassland and derelict arable, some of which should be cropped with arable crops and some re-sown down to grass. In order to do this, it would be necessary to nationalise agricultural land, with the exception of land occupied by small owner-farmers.

The management of such land, and the general supervision of the plan, to be in the hands of local committees of workers and small farmers, with extremely wide powers. Mass liming campaigns to be undertaken on a regional basis, and a vast draining scheme put into operation immediately.

The fertiliser firms to be nationalised, and supplies of fertilisers made available at much lower prices; likewise the large Tractor and Agricultural Implement firms to be taken over and production increased. All waste food to be collected, processed on a national scale, and distributed cheaply to small poultry and pig farmers; feeding-stuffs firms to be nationalised, and feeding-stuffs prices lowered.

Titre to be abolished, rents reduced, and cheap State credits granted to th small farmers from the nationalised banks.

An efficient distributive mechanism to be devised, and co-oprative marketing on the part of small farmers encouraged, thus making possible great reductions in retail prices by this means alone.

Farm workers' wages to be raised to 60/-, rents controlled at a maximum of 6/- per week, the tied cottage system abolished, and social services and rural amenities improved.

This is a programme which can unite the housewife in the food queue with the poultry farmer desperately searching for feeding stuffs; the man in the factory with the small farmer on his farm; the farm worker with his fellows in the town. Around it can be built a movement in town and countryside which will play a big part in the fight for food and for a People's Government which alone can see these things carried through.

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On the "March into the Ukraine"

BY MARK FOUR

IF THERE is one statement that appears almost daily in the press of this country it is the constant refrain that Nazi Germany is about to march into the Ukraine. This was Hitler's aim until it was postponed in August, 1939, when he sent von Ribbentrop to Moscow to sign a Non-Aggression Pact. Since that date the Soviet frontier has been changed throughout its entire length from the Arctic to the Black Sea. Is it probable, or even possible, for this dream of Nazism to be fulfilled to-day ?

Many factors enter into the study of this question, but one of the most vital is the strategic significance of the present common frontier of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. To obtain a clearer analysis of this frontier it will be studied from a purely military topographical angle and this part of the question isolated for the present from other factors which might tend to confuse. Some of these other factors which are equally important will be brought in at the conclusion.

The Soviet Government has taken the initiative on four occasions, since August 1939, to alter its European frontier. Taking them in geographical order from the north, the frontier in Finland was altered at the end of the Finnish war. The Mannerheim Line was broken up and the frontier pushed back sufficiently far as to relieve Leningrad from any threat. The occupation of the Baltic States of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and their incorporation into the Soviet Union at their own request brought the Red Army up to the frontier of East Prussia. After the collapse of the Polish Government in September, 1939, the Red Army raced across to Warsaw and chose a frontier with Germany, which has remained stable up to the present. Lastly, the Soviet Government took over from Roumania the provinces of Bessarabia and the Bukovina in the south. The present frontier, stretching some 800 miles as the crow flies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, may be considered throughout its length as the common frontier between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, for though Hungary holds the part in Ruthenia, she is a member of the Tri-Partite Pact, whose head is German; and in Rumania German troops occupy if not rule the country.

The effect of the first two changes (Finland and the Baltic States) has been to destroy completely the "Hoffman" plan. General Hoffman had considered the best line of invasion of Rusisa to be in the north by two movements, the one through the Baltic States, while the other came down through Finland using the Mannerheim Line, 21 miles from Leningrad, as a jumping-off base. So much for the negative side; but on the positive side the changes for the Soviet Union were even more important. The Soviet Fleet had been locked in the Bay of Finland, with only one base, Krondstadt, near Leningrad, and for three months in the year this was ice-

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blocked, thus immobilising the fleet. Now with the command of Hangö as well as the ice-free ports of the Baltic States the Red Fleet has complete freedom of movement, and, owing to the great losses inflicted on the German Fleet by the British in the present war, the Red Fleet is mistress of the whole Baltic sea.

The change in frontier which the Soviet Union decided on in what had been Poland took place when German armies, after their successful campaign of a few weeks against the Poles, rushed forward to seize the whole prize for which she had fought. But here the speed of the Red Army (a third as fast again as the famous Panzer Divisions) brought the frontier almost to the gates of Warsaw, before the Germans could consolidate their gains. In the south, however, owing to the greater distance over which they had to travel, the Red Army found the Panzer Divisions almost in view of their chief goal, the oilfields of Galicia. But the Red Army insisted on their immediate withdrawal in this area to a line as far back as Przemysl, and this was done. As a compensation the Red Army retired from the Warsaw suburbs to the line of the River Bug. That this was a double gain for the Red Army in these two moves will appear later. Thus this new frontier was the deliberate choice of the Soviet Government and it will be seen that it was chosen entirely from a military angle so as to give the Red Army a strategic advantage in any possible future conflict.

The last change of frontier, in the south in Roumania, gave the Red Army the Eastern Carpathians in the Bukovina as well as the line of the river Pruth to the mouth of the Danube in the Black Sea. Here in the Black Sea the Red Fleet is supreme. No German warships can reach the Black Sea and, even if the Dardanelles were to pass into their hands, it would be futile for the German Fleet to sail all round Europe to reach this sea. Thus the two flanks of this land frontier rests on seas, both of which are in Red Fleet hands. But in any case the role that the fleets would play in a great land conflict on such an immense front would be of minor importance and the relative inferiority of Nazi Germany in this respect should have no emphasis put on to it.

It will be easier for the purpose of an analysis of this frontier to subdivide it into four parts, in order to study the military importance of the mountains, river and rail systems. But it must not be forgotten in this detailed analysis that all four parts are inter-related and would come into action as one whole movement. The first sector, starting from the north is roughly the frontier of East Prussia from the Baltic coast to the River Bug. The second sector carries the frontier from there to the mountains on the border of Ruthenia, now in the hands of Hungary. The third is the actual frontier along the watershed of the Ruthenian Carpathians as far as Bukovina, where the fourth sector stretches from the Eastern Carpathians along the River Pruth to the mouth of the Danube.

The first sector, the frontier of East Prussia extends for about 200 miles. The German Army is faced on the north by the river Nyemen, while on the south the lake system makes an awkward obstacle for the deployment of large forces for both armies. But on the east there are no

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natural features to hinder an offensive on Vilna with the main base of the Nazi army at Konigsberg. This advance would be invaluable, if successful, for it would cut the main line of Red Army communications from Vilna through Bialystok towards Warsaw. Vilna is about 100 miles from the East Prussian frontier. For this advance the German army would stay on the defensive on the Nyemen front to protect their base. Any advance north across the Nyemen would achieve little, for Riga is too far to reach and this movement would only lengthen their front unnecessarily. Besides, to cross this river obstacle in the face of Red Army opposition would be a costly operation. The lake system on the south would be used as a flank protection for the offensive on Vilna.

Looking at it from the Red Army point of view Konigsberg would be the best objective for an offensive due west from Vilna. This would probably be supplemented by a threat from south of the lake system towards Danzig and it would be based on Bialystok. A successful advance here would isolate Konisberg and would be of great value. Thus in this small sector the positional advantage is fairly even with a slight advantage perhaps for the Red forces operating on exterior lines. But this sector would not play a part of major importance compared to the role of the other sectors where the main decisions would be fought out to a decisive result.

The second sector is about 350 miles long and runs in a south-easterly direction to Brest Litovsk, joining the River Bug where the main Warsaw railway crosses the frontier about half-way along this part of about 100 miles. From Brest Litovsk it follows the Bug in a southerly direction for about 150 miles, where it turns sharply west away from the river to the town of Przemsyl. Up to this point the whole country is one huge plain, ideal for large scale operations and the employment of all modern weapons, especially for the use of parachute armies. At Przemsyl the line reaches the foothills of the Carpathian mountains and follows the meanderings of the river San up to the crest of the Ruthenian Carpathians, where the third sector begins.

In giving up the forward line near Warsaw and withdrawing their centre to the line of the Bug in September, 1939, the Red Army had given the German Army a very difficult problem. The Germans were faced by the formidable obstacle of the Bug in their centre, whilst behind this centre lay the Pripet Marshes, a whole area of country, formed by the many head waters of the streams which eventually make up the River Pripet. A break through by the Panzer Divisions in this area is almost impossible and this centre on the Bug could be lightly held by the Red Army, who need have little fear of any threat to the important rail lines running through the Marshes, that is the lines from Minsk and Pinsk, as well as the Kiev-Warsaw line. This retreated centre of the Red Army gives the Germans the problem of facing two overhanging threats, the enveloping flank movements in the north and south of Poland on Warsaw, a "pincer" movement, to use a favourite phrase of journalists, of great power. The only offensive action the German Army can take in this sector is to force these flanks back, a task none too easy in the south and almost impossible in the north owing to the cramped position of its base Warsaw, only 60

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miles from the front line. Evidently this new frontier had been chosen with the greatest care by the Red Army, and entirely with view of holding the strategic initiative in the event of any further trouble between the two countries.

In fact from the purely military point of view it would be better for the German army to abandon this almost hopeless position and to form a defensive line on the Vistula and merely hold the forward areas with light forces to delay the Red advance. They would then have some hope of attacking the Red Army when it is on the move and out of their present superb strategic position. Of course, to take such a course would mean a heavy loss of prestige, but in war destruction of the enemy's forces is more important than prestige. But what would cause the German army to remain on this present line is the fear of the too close a proximity of the Red forces to Berlin, already only about 300 miles away. Thus in this sector the German efforts will be entirely absorbed in holding back a Red advance, and all hope of the "March into the Ukraine," the catch-phrase by spotlight civilian journalists, melts away, on this sector at any rate.

From the Red Army point of view their whole weight would be thrown into a march on Warsaw from Bialystok to turn by this flank movement not only the forward position of the German Army but any other position they may seek to take up on the Vistula. At the same time an offensive based on Lwow would move north-westwards to turn the Vistula position from the other outflanking angle. It is quite possible with the immense parachute armies possessed by the Red Army (and these are far in advance of the feeble German efforts displayed in the present war) that the impetus of the Red advance would force the Germans back right to the Danzig-Cracow line, threatening the capture of Berlin itself—not for the first time in Russian history.*

Now comes the most important sector of all, the third one, which is in fact the key to the whole strategic situation. The frontier runs for 120 miles along the crest of the Carpathians in Ruthenia in a south-easterly direction to the Eastern Carpathians in the Bukovina. Three railways cross the passes of these mountains over the frontier and these passes are in the hands of the Red Army. The two most important run from Lwow into Hungary and to Budapest. It is 200 odd miles from the passes to Budapest. In the last war Czarist armies had struggled and exhausted their strength in their effort to reach these vital passes, and with this knowledge it is small wonder that the Soviet Government insisted on the withdrawal of the German Army in September, 1939, for from these heights is a clear run down into the great wheat plain of Hungary. Any advance along this line is protected from a threat from the direction of Germany and Poland by the West Carpathians, an enormous block reaching through Slovakia almost to the capital of Hungary. Whereas the Ruthenian Carpathians rise to 5,000 feet, these mountains rise even to 9,000 feet. Two railways wind their way through from Cracow, but emerge nearer to Budapest than the passes, so that no force moving down them would have

* One British newspaper carried the news of an offer by the Nazis to the Soviet Union of an exchange of most of their part of what was Poland for a part of Lithuania. This shows how the Nazi High Command appreciates the awkward position in which their forces are placed.

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sufficient weight to have any decisive effect on a Red thrust into Hungary. On the other flank the Eastern Carpathians in the Bukovina prevent any threat from German armies in Rumania. Down this protected route the Red Army could sweep forward to Budapest. The Nazi Army would never trust Hungarian troops at this key to the strategic frontier and would take over this sector. There can be little doubt that it is here the German Army is "massing" its troops, to use another favourite newspaper word. But no massing on this narrow front could achieve sufficient weight and power to reach the passes and "March into the Ukraine" in the face of the Red concentrations based on Lwow. All their time and energy would be fully employed trying to hold the whole weight of the Red onslaught on the down hill slopes in Ruthenia. Here it is that the enormous army of parachute troops would be hurled into the Hungarian hinterland. The prize here is so great that it would be worth considerable sacrifice on the part of the Red Army to gain the object with all speed.

Budapest is the main junction for all the lines that supply the Nazi armies from Germany to the Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Southern Yugo-Slavia. Budapest once in Red Army hands, those armies would be at the mercy of the local inhabitants for they would be forced to fight their way back to Germany or surrender. Moreover, Budapest is only 80 miles from Vienna, and the arrival of Red troops would no doubt be welcomed by the people as the deliverer from Nazi tyranny. With Vienna occupied the route to north Yugo-Slavia is cut off. Finally 150 miles north-west of Budapest lies Prague, the capital of the Czechs, a people who have not forgotten the honest role of Soviet Russia at the time of the Munich betrayal, and who long for the help of Soviet Union to free them from the Nazi yoke. Thus with the help of the subject races in all these countries the Red Army would now have a front threatening Germany and Berlin itself from the south as well as the west. Thus Budapest is the centre kernel of the whole strategic problem.

The last sector runs over the East Carpathians down to the river Pruth and this it follows south-eastwards to the Black Sea at the Danube mouth. The mountains block any threat to the Red Army rear and the river, with powerful Red forces behind it, prevents any threat of invasion in the southern part of the Ukraine. Here the Red Army could act on the defensive, if necessary. But this is hardly likely in view of the other offensive actions of the Red armies everywhere. It is more than probable the Red Army would come to the aid of the local people of the Balkans in attacking and disarming Nazi Armies, cut off, as they would be, from their main base.

It should be noted here that when Soviet Russia insisted on being a member of the Danube Commission in the face of strong reluctance on the part of Nazi Germany, she also decided to place river gunboats on that river, where they ply to-day, flaunting the red flag with its hammer and sickle to the irritation of the Nazis who have as yet no gunboats there, and probably to the amusement and encouragement of such of the local population as toil on its banks.

Now when the common frontier is considered as a whole it is obvious that there is only one portion where the Nazi armies could take the

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offensive with the smallest hope of success, and that is the march on Vilna in Lithuania. On the whole of the rest of this line Germany would be forced to abandon the initiative and move to the defensive in desperation. It becomes clear that the whole frontier was chosen entirely from a military point of view and with one object: to have a stranglehold over the Nazi Germany so that the Soviet Government would be caught by no "accident" which might put her peoples in jeopardy of war. The faith of the Nazi word was now guaranteed by this strategic position. The Red Army had passed from the strategic defensive to the strategic offensive and the famous "March on the Ukraine" becomes an empty slogan of the British press.

If Hitler dared so much as attempt any hostile action the whole Red Army would be set in motion, the march on Danzig, the envelopment of the Nazi Armies in Poland and the vital sweep down to Budapest, and this would mean the end of the Hitler hold in the East and South. The possibilities of Red uprisings in Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, and even Germany herself should not be overlooked. Perhaps this fact growing in the consciousness of the Nazi leaders makes them look with apprehension at this sword of Damocles, this iron hand at present in a velvet glove. Perhaps it may account for the flight to a mansion in Scotland of the hero of Dachau, Rudolf Hess.

Up to the present for the purpose of the consideration of the geographical side of the problem, it had been presumed that the forces on both sides had been about equal except where one mention was made of the great superiority of parachute armies of the Soviet Union. But a few other factors should not be omitted. In the pre-1939 days, when the Soviet frontier had been so difficult to defend from a strategic point of view, Hitler had declared "Russia has the strongest air force, the strongest tank corps, and the strongest army in the world." He had shown reluctance when urged to march on the Ukraine with kind words and cash. In those days Stalin informed the world that if any lunatics thought it was possible they had plenty of strait-jackets for them. Since that day Soviet Union has not only completely re-equipped her immense army with the latest models based on war experience, but she is spending seven times as much as she did.

Churchill pointed out that the Nazi armies stretched out from the Arctic to the Aegean, from the Atlantic to the Black Sea, and that this was a sign of weakness. If this was a sign of weakness to Great Britain, who has to fight her way on to this continent, what must it be in the face of the Red Army with its 800-mile frontier, and not war weary after nearly two years of hostilities. The war weariness of the people of Germany must not be forgotten any more than that of the long list of countries which have to be held in subjection by a garrison as well as a Gestapo. But the most important factor of all, and one which is hidden or conveniently forgotten, is that the Red Army is first, foremost, and finally a political army. It is dawning on the thoughts of the working people of Europe, as well as those of the rest of the world that the Red Army is ready and eager to stand by the side of the liberation of the peoples, not only from the yoke of Hitler and Nazism, but from all exploitation by a landlord and financial

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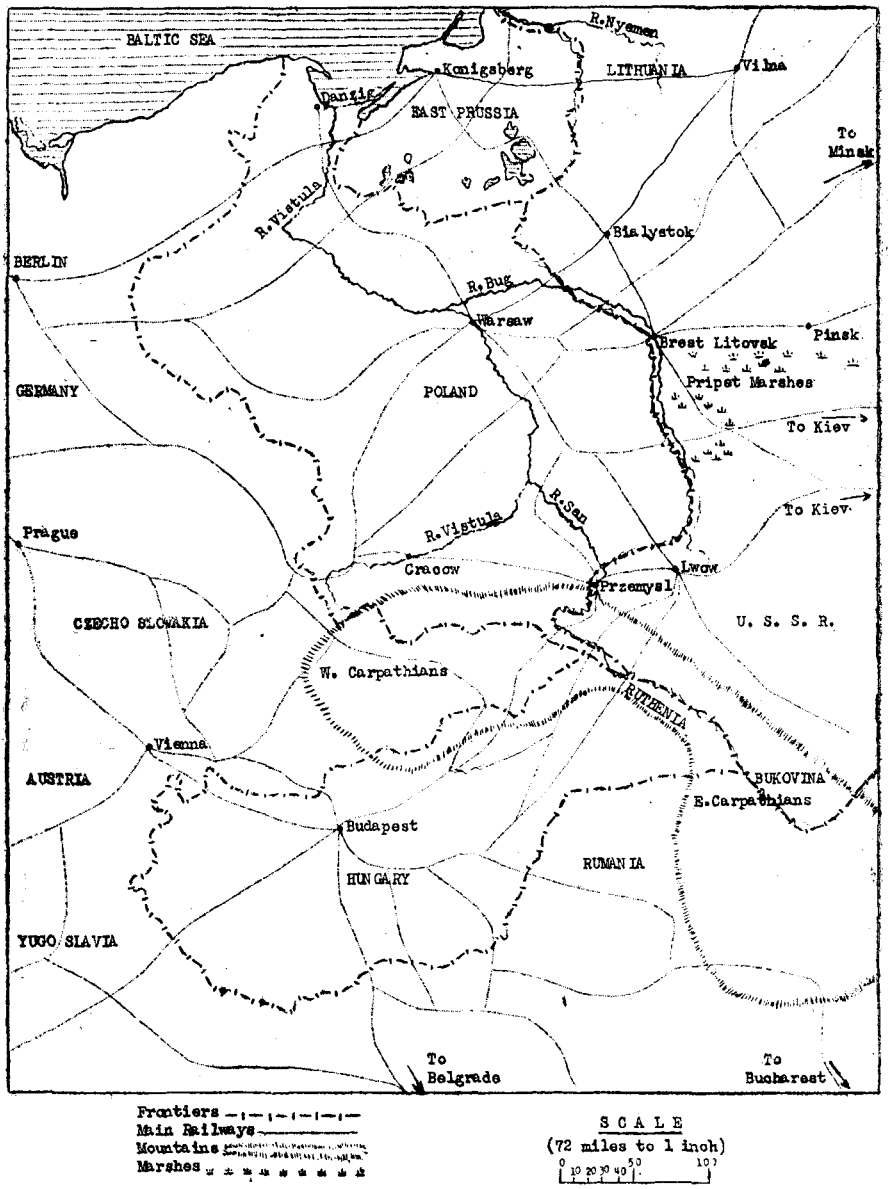
class. This gives the Red Army in any advance they may make the most valuable allies behind the Nazi lines—in the Balkans, in Czecho-Slovakia, in the Low Countries and France, in Spain, in Denmark and Norway, in Italy and in Germany itself. One move on Hitler's part to "March into the Ukraine" and not all the wishful thinking of the British press could save him and the Nazi system from complete annihilation. And Hitler knows it.

SOVIET - GERMAN FRONTIER, 1941.



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Camouflaged Statistics

BY PETER FIELD

WITH the budget the Government published a White Paper on war finance, national income and expenditure.* This White Paper was heralded in the press as providing for the first time a really clear statement of the most important figures connected with national finance; and some of the tables were widely reproduced. Many comments referred to the fact that of all kinds of income wages had fared best. The official table showing the national income is as follows:

First View and Distortions:

National Income, 1938 and 1940.

Items	1938	1940
	£ million	
1. Rents	352	370
2. Profits and interest before deduction of National Defence Contribution and Excess Profits Tax	1,178	1,514
3. Salaries	980	1,135
4. Wages (including payments to armed forces and earnings of shop assistants)	1,820	2,483
5. Other income	85	84
6. Net national income (before deduction of direct taxes)	4,415	5,586

The Economist, April 12, 1941, computes from this another table showing what percentage each of the above items forms of the total income, and finds in the case of wages this was 41 per cent. in 1938, but 44.5 per cent. in 1940. The first comment *The Economist* makes on this table is "to point out the rapid increase in the share of wages in the national income under war conditions."

Second View:

If we look more carefully at the above table we see that, in fact, no figures on wages are given. The wage figures are carefully camouflaged by throwing them together with the pay to the armed forces.** The wages of textile workers and the pay of hundreds of generals and admirals and ten thousands of other officers are combined into one figure. No wonder this figure shows an increase since the size of the Army, Navy, and Air Force rose enormously between 1938 and 1940. This wage figure, including as it does payments to the armed forces, is probably the oddest statistical hotch-potch ever brought before the public. But the press and papers like *The Economist* accept it with delight because it purports to show that the share of wages in the national income has increased considerably during the war.

Third View—De-camouflaged Statistics:

According to the above table, profits between 1938 and 1940 in-

* An Analysis of the Sources of War Finance and an Estimate of the National Income and Expenditure in 1938 and 1940. Cmd.6261.

** Looking at the Treasury data it seems possible that a mistake has been made by adding the payments to the armed forces in 1940 only; for the 1938 figure for wages fits well into the computations of Professor Bowley (Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Part IV, 1940) which, of course, exclude payments to the armed forces.

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creased by 29 per cent. As to wages and salaries combined the table shows exactly the same increase, namely 29 per cent. But what has happened to these two groups, the one receiving profits, and the other receiving wages, during these two years?

The group receiving profits declined in numbers—I should say by at least 10 per cent. It included in 1938 small craftsmen, shop-keepers, small business men, who by 1940 had lost their businesses because of the war, together with professional men (lawyers, doctors, etc.) who by 1940 had given up their jobs and joined the Forces. In other words, a constantly declining number of people has received a constantly increasing income.

The group in receipt of wages and salaries has increased very considerably through the inclusion of the armed forces. It includes now:

> Firstly, all wage and salary earners* working in industry and agriculture (including all those who were unemployed in 1938 and working in 1940): all those who in 1938 did not work as salary and wage earners but as "profit" receivers, that is, chiefly, small shopkeepers, independent craftsmen and farmers who lost their businesses and were then compelled to work on a wage or salary basis; and all those who in 1938 did not seek work, but who to-day are employed on a wage or salary basis—for the most part women.
>
> Secondly, the armed forces which are composed of those who were wage and salary earners in 1938, but who by 1940 had joined the Forces; small shopkeepers, independent craftsmen and farmers who joined the Forces; professional men and all others who joined the Forces.

All in all this group has increased in numbers by between 15 and 20 per cent.**

If we take into account the decline in the number of profit receivers in the profit group and the considerable increase in the number of those receiving wages (including payments to the armed forces), and finally the increase in the cost of living, then we arrive at the conclusion that *the real income per head in the profit group has increased between 1938 and 1940 by about 25 per cent., while the real income per head in the wage and salary group has declined by not much less than 10 per cent.* (in both cases before deduction of taxes).

The table—so much admired and beloved by the press—if decamouflaged, really indicates that the rich enrich themselves further while the masses of the people live on a considerably reduced standard. The table indicates, furthermore, to what means the Government is driven to camouflage its statistics in order to save itself from attacks from the people.

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* Including director's salaries, which in number and size have increased considerably during the war.

** Sir Walter Citrine estimates the number of employed workers to-day at over 15 million (Appeal over the wireless for the Red Cross Penny-a-week Fund, April 27, 1941). In 1940 it was probably little less than 16 million, or about the same as in 1938. The number in 1940 was about the same as in 1938, in spite of many workers joining the Forces, chiefly because of the growing absorption of the unemployed (about 1 million being absorbed), and because many women were entering the working force in factory, office and agriculture. Since the armed forces, the pay of which is included, increased between 1938 and 1940 probably by at least 3 million, it is reasonable to assume that the total number of people included in the wage group increased by 15 to 20 per cent.

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DOCUMENT OF THE MONTH

Indian Trade Union Movement

Eighteenth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress

The Eighteenth Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held at Bombay on 28 and 29 September 1940; Dr. Suresh Chandra Banerjee, President of the Congress, presided. The session constituted a landmark in the history of the Indian labour movement in that it witnessed the restoration of complete unity in Indian trade union ranks by the merging of the National Trades Union Federation in the All-India Trade Union Congress.

In 1935 an agreement had been reached between the representatives of the All-India Trade Union Congress and the National Trades Union Federation by virtue of which a joint committee of the two organisations was to be formed with a view to exploring the possibilities of common action with the assistance of the unions affiliated to both. In April 1938, at a special Joint Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress and the National Trades Union Federation held at Nagpur, it was decided to combine these two bodies into one central organisation. The present decision to merge the N.T.U.F. in the A.I.T.U.C. is the fruit of these earlier decisions. The N.T.U.F. at its final session of 28 September, in its merger resolution, appointed a merger committee of Messrs. N. M. Joshi, V. R. Kalappa and S. C. Joshi and stipulated a three-quarter majority as necessary in questions of politics, strikes and foreign affiliations. The total membership of the A.I.T.U.C. after the amalgamation will be 195 unions with a membership of 374,526; of these 61 unions with a membership of 150,047 belong to the N.T.U.F.

Election of Officers

The following officers were elected: President, Mr. V. R. Kalappa; Vice-Presidents, Mr. Aftab Ali, Dr. Charu Banerjee, and Mr. Purshottam Trikamdas; General Secretary, Mr. N. M. Joshi; Assistant Secretaries, Miss Shanta Balerao and Mr. Phani Ghose; Treasurer, Mr. R. S. Nimbkar.

The following are some of the more important resolutions adopted:

Conscription of Skilled Labour

The Congress protested against the Ordinance to conscript skilled industrial labour on the ground that it involved compulsion as well as the forcible transfer of workers to distant places, causing hardship and loss of personal liberty, and demanded an immediate repeal of the Ordinance.

War Allowance

This resolution congratulated the workers all over India on the vigorous protests that they had launched on the outbreak of war to defend their standards of life. The Congress strongly condemned the attitude of the employers and of the Central and Provincial Governments who resisted this just demand of the workers. It noted that in a large number of cases no wage increases had been granted and that where increases had been granted they were most inadequate. The constituent unions and the workers in general were called upon to carry on a persistent and determined struggle for securing adequate compensation for the rise in the standard of living.

Repression by Government

An indignant and emphatic protest was made against the policy of repression pursued by the Government since the outbreak of the war, by which some of the leading persons in the trade union movement had been put under restraint "with or without judicial trial on various allegations, more particularly for alleged violation of the Defence of India Act." This policy had resulted in the paralysis of the day-to-day work of trade unions and peasant (kisan) organisations. The Congress called upon the working class to oppose such measures of repression and to defend their civil liberties.

Attitude to Present War

"As the present war between Great Britain on one side and the Fascist Powers on the other is claimed by Britain to be waged for the vindication of the principles of freedom and democracy and not for any imperialist purposes, India, without having any sympathy for either imperialism or Fascism, naturally claims for herself freedom and democratic government before she can be expected to take part in the war. Participation in a war which will not result in the establishment of freedom and democracy in India will not benefit India, much less will it benefit the working classes in India."

In the report for 1938-1940 presented to the Session by the General Secretary it was stated that: By a resolution of the Working Committee passed in August 1938, the A.I.T.U.C. decided to co-operate with the All-India Kisan Sabha (the national peasants' organisation) in the formation of a Joint Committee of Workers and Peasants for a combined drive against exploitation by landlords and capitalists.

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BOOK REVIEWS

1. How to arrange World Wars

Viscount Cecil is a lifelong Conservative and imperialist, brought up in one of the wealthy families of big landowners and shareholders who rule the British Empire. He supported the Boer War, for which President Kruger "was chiefly to blame"; he was Minister of Blockade during the first imperialist world war of 1914-18; he defends the Versailles Treaty; he supported the Lloyd George Government during its invasion of Soviet Russia (1918-1920); in 1924 he was in the Cabinet which declared genuine the notorious forgery of the "Zinoviev Letters"; in 1925 he supported the Locarno Treaty which first attempted to turn Germany against the Soviet Union, in 1926 he fought the General Strike as a "revolutionary attempt," and in 1927 he endorsed the police raid on Arcos, and the rupture of Anglo-Soviet relations. In all Lord Cecil's speeches and writings, you feel that his loyalty to the Foreign Office comes first, and his internationalism second.

Robert Dell was a lifelong Radical with leanings to Socialism, who worked for his living all his life, first as an art critic and connoisseur and later as a foreign correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" and a political lecturer. He was a member of William Morris' "Socialist League" in the eighties, attracted not only by the poet's personality but also by his revolutionary principles. In the last years before the war of 1914, Dell was a supporter of the French anarcho-syndicalists, whose contempt for parliamentary corruption and propaganda of mass action appealed to him. In the last few years before the present war, Dell came closer to the Communists, and wrote on international affairs for the LABOUR MONTHLY. Withal he retained many Liberal prejudices—regretting the break-up of the Austrian Empire, for example, considering the Germans unfit for "equal rights with civilised peoples," and never fully understanding the British Labour movement.

Two more unlike characters it would be difficult to imagine on the international arena. All the more impressive, therefore, is their substantial agreement in surveying [*] the twenty years' life of the League of Nations between the first and second imperialist world wars, and particularly in their severe censure of British Government policy during that period. Dell is the more outspoken and courageous of the two; Cecil the more hesitant and anxious to save the face of the British Empire. But their testimony is eloquently similar, none the less.

On the betrayal of China and the breaking of innumerable pledges, when Japan launched her first attack in 1931, Cecil describes how, after an elaborate investigation by a League of Nations Commission had established Japanese aggression, "the British delegate, Sir John Simon, made a forensic defence of Japan . . . It was that speech which made it finally impossible to take any effective action on behalf of the central doctrine of the Covenant . . . that aggression is an international crime" (p. 231).

Dell describes how "from the beginning to the end of the Manchurian affair, Sir John Simon acted as advocate for Japan . . . The British ruling classes have always hoped for a Japanese attack on the Soviet Union, and they prefer Japanese to Russian influence in Asia (p. 69) . . . Matsuoka said: "What I have been trying to say in my bad English for the last ten days, Sir John Simon has said in his excellent English in half-an-hour" (p. 83) . . . The policy of the British Government in this case has had disastrous consequences to the British Empire" (p. 89). Dell also tells how, in 1937, Lord Cranborne opposed mentioning the Japanese in a resolution which condemned the horrible air bom-

[*] Robert Dell. "The Geneva Racket" (375 pp., 18/-, 1941) Robert Hale.

[*] Viscount Cecil. "A Great Experiment" (390 pp., 16/-, 1941), Jonathan Cape.

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bardment of Chinese towns—on the ground that this would "lengthen the resolution" (p. 189).

After telling, with a wealth of facts and documents, all the sordid details (both well-known and little-known) of the betrayal of Abyssinia, Dell sums up: "The British Government deceived Mussolini, deceived the British people, and deceived the States members of the League of Nations who applied sanctions on its initiative. Its policy did the maximum of harm to everybody concerned, including England . . . It subjected the League of Nations to the worst humiliation in its history, destroyed the faith of all countries in the League as an instrument of peace and a guarantee against aggression . . ." (pp 142-3). Cecil writes that the famous Hoare-Laval proposals for carving up Abyssinia in favour of Italy, which were approved by the British Cabinet, were "the first clear example of what came to be called the policy of appeasement, that is, a policy of placating your enemies by sacrificing your friends" (p. 275). Simon's speech on June 23rd, 1936, declaring he "was not prepared to risk a single ship to preserve Abyssinian independence" was, Cecil says, "an advertisement to the aggressive powers and the neutrals that the Covenant meant nothing to us. It was the deathblow to collective security and indeed to the League as a guarantee of peace" (p. 278).

To take a final example: Czechoslovakia. Cecil writes of 1938: "I well remember the kind of talk that was popular in ministerial circles at that time, suggestions for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the abandonment of her fortified frontier and even the cession of all the south-eastern countries to the domination of the Axis Powers. To such irresponsible language, history has given the reply" (p. 312). After telling "the whole melancholy story which no decent Briton can read without acute discomfort" (p. 313), Cecil asks: "Who paid the bill? Not France or the British Empire—they believed that they were paying nothing, and **for the time being that was true.** Any suggestion that we might offer to surrender some portion of the British Empire in order to buy Hitler off was indignantly rejected" (pp. 318-319). He pays a high tribute to the Soviet Union's readiness to fulfil its treaty obligations, and to its proposal for joint action in support of peace, which would have "definitely checked" Hitler (p. 311).

But that was just what Chamberlain did not want, Dell points out: at the famous Astor lunch in May, 1938, at which Chamberlain met 9 or 10 American correspondents, he made clear that "more than four months before the capitulation to Hitler at Munich, the Prime Minister of England had already decided to sacrifice Czechoslovakia, if he could, in order to get an understanding with Germany" (p. 265). Diplomatic opinion in Europe was almost unanimous in September, 1938, Dell observes—and he moved among the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of every European country (except Britain and France), assembled at the time in Geneva for the League Assembly—that Hitler would never have dared to challenge a joint declaration by Britain, France and the U.S.S.R.; "but Hitler knew that Chamberlain and Runciman were on his side" (p. 271). The exclusion of the U.S.S.R. at this time was one of the chief causes of the present war, Dell declares. He adds one important fact, hitherto unpublished in this country, to what was already known of the Soviet position in 1938 (p. 281).

> "Just before the Munich meeting, the Soviet Government informed Benes that, if the Czechoslovak Government resisted Germany, Soviet Russia would go to the aid of Czechoslovakia single-handed. This was publicly stated afterwards by Benes in the United States."

These brief extracts do inadequate justice to these most informing books. Of the two, Dell's is the better companion for the student of international affairs, since it is incomparably richer in documents fully quoted, facts, dates and revealing indiscretions, unrestrained by Cecil's constant concern to save the face of the British Government. The one weak chapter is the last, in which Dell's isolation from international affairs (he was in Paris, under the full blast of French official propaganda, during the greater part of 1939), leads him to wild and unsupported attacks on the U.S.S.R. But this is in such glaring contrast to the rest of the book that the latter loses nothing of its value. Cecil's book, though less precise, is, however, full of valuable material—it is interesting to learn, at first hand, that the Pope's "chief anxiety," on the eve of the Disarmament Conference of 1932, was "lest the Bolsheviks should overrun a disarmed Europe" (p. 224)—and even against his will, Cecil is forced to reveal remarkable details of British imperialist technique. For example, the identical

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method of disarming the victims of the Axis used against China, Abyssinia and Spain, under the pretence of "treating both sides equally" (pp. 170, 268, 282). Taken together, the two books present a devastating reply to those who pretend that the present world conflict is not an imperialist war.

II. How to Fight for Peace

The four speeches of Molotov, delivered at the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. between August, 1939, and August, 1940, and now published with a foreword by D. N. Pritt, K.C., M.P., reveal a totally new kind of diplomacy* As Pritt remarks, it has been "clear and consistent to a quite unusual degree," in which, contrary to the practice of Austen Chamberlain and Samuel Hoare, Lord Halifax and Anthony Eden, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs "says what he means and means what he says."

The first speech, made on August 31, 1939, after the signature of the Soviet-German Pact of Non-Aggression, gives a trenchant summary of the Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations of that year. Here is such a crushing exposure of British imperialist democracy *that—most significant—even at* the height of the anti-Soviet campaign during the Finnish war, when the British Government stuck at nothing, it did not dare to attempt an answer.

What are the facts recalled by Molotov's speech? First, that throughout the negotiations the British and French Governments displayed an unbelievable frivolousness and dilatoriness—dragging out the political negotiations from April until August, after the U.S.S.R. had made a clear offer, based on reciprocity and equality of obligations. Second, that the military missions which they sent to Moscow in August were a farce, alike in their composition, their lack of powers and their refusal to talk about Soviet military help for Poland. Third, that all this time the Germans and Italians were winning success after success in Europe, and consequently the Anglo-French tactics were obviously calculated to encourage Hitler: while their attitude over Poland infallibly meant that he could go on against Poland, too, if he liked—and against the Soviet Union.

From these facts the Soviet Government could and did draw one conclusion. "It is our duty to think of the interests of the Soviet people, the interests of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — all the more because we are firmly convinced that the interests of the U.S.S.R. coincide with the fundamental interests of the peoples of other countries." The task was lightened because the German Government itself decided to change its policy towards the U.S.S.R. The result was the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact of August 23, 1939—"On the strength of which the U.S.S.R. is not obliged to involve itself in war either on the side of Great Britain against Germany or on the side of Germany against Great Britain." Molotov deals sharply with the arguments used by those who thought otherwise.

The second speech was delivered on October 31, after two months of war. Molotov gave a striking and still unanswered analysis of the causes and nature of the new imperialist struggle, and—months before Churchill—declared: "This war promises nothing to the working class but bloody sacrifice and hardship." By contrast, he recapitulated the principles constituting the new basis of Soviet-German relations.

But Molotov had other great events to report in the sphere of Soviet foreign policy. First was the reoccupation of Ukrainian and Byelorussian territory seized by the Polish imperialist landlords in 1919-20, and the consequent liberation of 13 million people (whose conditions of barbarous oppression had been eloquently described, more than once, by British journalists before the war). Next came the Pacts of Mutual Assistance concluded with the (then capitalist) republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—*pacts which kept the Baltic*

* "Soviet Peace Policy": Four Speeches by V. Molotov. Lawrence & Wishart, 1941. 101 pp. 3s. 6d.

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States out of the war, while ensuring respect for their internal affairs, so long as their governments loyally fulfilled the Pacts.

Then there were negotiations which had failed. One was with Finland, for territorial adjustments which would have greatly added to Finnish territory while reinforcing Soviet security. One of the most unmistakeable signs of the anti-Soviet campaign which was worked up by the British Press in the early winter of 1939 was the fact that not a single capitalist newspaper dared to publish this section of Molotov's speech in full. Lastly there were the abortive negotiations with Turkey, which failed because the Turkish Government had tied up its destinies with Britain and France. "Whether Turkey will not come to regret it we shall not try to guess," was Molotov's dry comment.

The whole of this speech is packed with forgotten facts of international history and valuable material for understanding Soviet foreign policy. The same applies to Molotov's comments on the Anglo-French campaign against Soviet neutrality, made in his third speech (March 29, 1940). At a time when there is once again glib talk of the Soviet Union's "rejecting British overtures" and "lining up with Germany," it is appropriate to recall Molotov's catalogue of hostile Anglo-French acts against the U.S.S.R. in the winter of 1939-40, and his caustic remark that "the plans of the British and French ruling circles to utilise our country in the war against Germany have been frustrated, and as a result they are pursuing a policy of revenge towards the Soviet Union." That policy of revenge, it may be remarked, has been pursued ever since, notwithstanding every Soviet effort to improve relations with this country.

The height of that policy, of course, was reached in the Finnish War, to which Molotov devotes the bulk of his speech. "What was going on in Finland was not merely our collision with Finnish troops. It was a collision with the combined forces of a number of imperialist States, most hostile towards the Soviet Union." And there are still politicians and journalists a-plenty who ask, with innocent surprise, "Why doesn't the Soviet Government trust us?" Here, too, there are many notable facts of which Molotov's speech reminds us.

The fourth speech, made on August 1, 1940, contains further examples of such facts—the attempts of the British Press to intimidate the U.S.S.R. by the prospect of the growth of Germany's strength, the appearance of mysterious foreign aeroplanes, coming from Turkey and Iran, over Batum and Baku (in March and April), the British embargo on the Baltic gold (July). At the same time, it gives a mass of further evidence of the Soviet fight for peace.

Throughout these speeches runs the connecting thread of Molotov's insistence that *the Soviet Union never has been and never will be the tool of the policy of others, that the U.S.S.R. has always pursued its own policy and always will pursue it, irrespective of whether these gentry in other countries like it or not.* Those who rack their brains over the "riddle of the Kremlin" would do well to remember it.

E. M. WINTERTON.

A Classic of LENIN

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, by V. I. Lenin. Lawrence & Wishart, 6s.

At the outbreak of the war there existed a certain amount of confusion in the ranks of a number of the Communist Parties as to the character of imperialist policy and the methods of struggle against it. But the mistakes committed were speedily rectified and the meaning of the big changes in the entire international situation were quickly grasped. In all countries the Communist Parties have carried out a correct policy expressive of the interests of the working class. This is one of the fundamental differences between 1914 and 1939. To-day there exist tried revolutionary parties. Far from having collapsed as in 1914, the international movement is fulfilling its historic tasks, and the rise of the mass movement against the imperialist war has already begun.

The significance of these facts, even the facts themselves, have been obscured by the everlasting propaganda of the bourgeois Press and its hangers-on about "orders from Moscow" and "political somersaults." Actually, the British Communist Party reached

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full clarity after a discussion which lasted only a few weeks and which was carried through the Party, from top to bottom, in a thoroughly democratic manner. It was continued in the columns of the "Daily Worker" and thrown open to all readers. The entire Central Committee recognised the character of the errors committed and the principal leaders concerned made public declarations on the point.

Such political honesty and frankness caused a considerable sensation, especially as "no recriminations" (i.e. the covering up of all mistakes) is regarded as the golden political maxim to which all would-be statesmen should subscribe. One wealthy publisher, who for a short time had wandered into the paths of the Left movement but now wishes to burn his boats, even went to the length of publishing a long and tedious book about the incident some fifteen months after it had happened.

These reflections are prompted by a reading of Lenin's celebrated book, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," the complete version of which is now available to the English reader for the first time. Previously it could only be found in an abridged form in volume 2 of Lenin's Selected Works, also published by Lawrence & Wishart.

In this book, Lenin lays down those organisational principles which guided the Bolsheviks and which have enabled all Communist Parties to become strong, united organisations, which do not fall to pieces when faced with turning points in history demanding new policies and much sterner practical work. Here is told, in considerable detail, the story of the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Lenin analyses the minutes of the Congress with great care, reveals the various trends and the meaning of the differences of opinion, which were concentrated on the question of organisation, whether the party should be a united, monolithic body or of a loose, shapeless character, and open to all without specific disciplinary obligations.

Lenin vigorously attacks what he describes as "opportunism in organisation"; he dissects his opponents and shows that the root of the objection to a disciplined party is the desire to avoid the class struggle. The party desired by the Mensheviks would have strengthened the influence of the petty bourgeois intellectuals at the expense of the proletariat and would have given free rein to the instability of the former. Lenin not only flays the Mensheviks hip and thigh; in the course of the controversy he explains the meaning of organisation as the principal weapon of the working class and puts forward the fundamental organisational principles which have now been embodied in the rules of all revolutionary parties: role of the party as a vanguard of the workers, the principles of centralism, of discipline binding on leaders and members, the conception of class connection with the masses.

The reader will find that Lenin's method of controversy and both vigorous and highly entertaining, although the groupings and names of twenty-eight years ago need a reading of the "History of the C.P.S.U." for a full understanding. But there is nothing purely Russian in the application of this book. It has an international meaning. It has a meaning for to-day.

When Lenin wrote this book he had in mind not only the Axelrods and Martovs, but also their prototypes in the international movement, he was declaring war on all the opportunists of the Second International whose policies were preventing the building up of **organised** revolutionary parties. Lenin writes:

> "Not only in Germany, but in France and Italy as well, the opportunists are all in favour of autonomism, of a slackening of Party discipline, of reducing it to nought; everywhere their tendencies lead to **disorganisation** and to corrupting the "democratic principle" and converting it into **anarchism.**" (Page 259).

As a matter of fact, Lenin took special pains to carry this controversy with the Mensheviks right into the camp of the Second International. He wrote articles and letters in which he explained the international significance of this fight for a party of a new type, based on the "iron discipline necessary for the victory of the proletariat." The measure of the success achieved is to be seen to-day in the untiring work of the Communist Parties, their devotion to revolutionary principle and their ability, because of their discipline and structure, to grapple with sharp turns in the international situation.

It is the practice of the enemies of Communism to parody this discipline as "orders" from above, as a blind, mechanical obedience destructive of initiative and discussion. This nonsense is repeated in spite of the fact that the entire history of Bolshevism and of the Communist International is a record of free discussion and controversy out of which has come the

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triumph of Socialism across one-sixth of the world. In spite of the fact that Lenin delights in argument and never approaches any problem without a thoroughly dialectical examination of the case for and against.

In this book, Lenin greets the "struggle of shades in the Party" and emphasises that they are "inevitable and essential" so long as they are confined within certain bounds. Policy cannot come out of a headquarters' sausage machine, it is the result of discussion which must always be going on. But when decisions are arrived at they must be carried out by the entire Party without exception, otherwise it ceases to be a Party and breaks up into groups.

There is no better example of Lenin's attitude to discussion and argument than the following anecdote related by him with such obvious glee:

> "I cannot help recalling in this connection a conversation I happened to have with one of the "Centre" delegates. 'How oppressive the atmosphere is at our Congress!' he complained. 'This bitter fighting, this agitation one against the other, this biting controversy, this uncomradely behaviour!' . . . "What a splendid thing our Congress is!' I replied. 'A free and open struggle. Opinions have been stated. The shades have been made clear. The groups have taken shape. Hands have been raised. A decision has been taken. A stage has been passed. Forward! That's the stuff for me! That's life! That's something different from the endless, tedious word-chopping of your intellectuals which does not terminate because the question has been settled, but because they are too tired to talk any more' . . . The comrade of the 'Centre' stared at me in perplexity and shrugged his shoulders. We were talking in different languages." (Page 193).

A great book. Not only a stirring account of a mighty controversy of twenty-eight years ago, but also a guide to action in the problems that confront us at this very moment.

WILLIAM RUST.

Extract from Editorial Comment in the National Newsagent, 29th March, 1941.

"Nursery Discipline?"
Should Wholesalers Act as Political Censors?

"The publishers of LABOUR MONTHLY have received a letter from the National Association of Wholesale Newsagents stating that members will not, in future, participate in the distribution of their publication. No reason for the decision was given.

Arising from editorial comments in the NATIONAL NEWSAGENT, the publishers of this monthly have had numerous letters from newsagents all over the country, and in view of the information given had, firstly, improved their terms to the wholesalers and, secondly, taken up with individual wholesaling firms questions raised about the margins being given to newsagents. This bleakly intimated decision to "ban" LABOUR MONTHLY seems a sorry reply to a publisher who has taken very active steps to protect every section of the trade.

There seems to be no valid business reason for this "ban". Nothing but a business reason (aimed at preventing unfair commercial methods) ought to enable wholesalers to pick and choose what papers they will handle. The machinery of the law exists to stop the distribution of what should not be distributed. Wholesalers are not the law officers of Great Britain.

The assumption of arbitary powers of virtual censorship is a very dangerous function for wholesalers to take. Their existence as purely business organisations, and their right to collect income from the publishing trade, depends upon their giving a complete, utterly impersonal and efficient service to the country's retail newsagents. The public—guided sometimes by Parliament and the Government—decides what it wants to read.

Neither wholesale nor retail newsagents must pretend they know better than the public they exist to serve. This "know better" type of mind belongs to the nursery. It has no place in the adult world and certainly not in one where the grim defence of democratic rights is the anxious care of every sane citizen."

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Discussion Groups

Groups are actively functioning in the following towns, and we should be pleased to put any of our readers in touch with the Convenors if they will write to us: N.B.—1, 2, 3, 4: Combined Groups.

Abercynon
Aberystwyth
Acton
Arundel
Alloa
Aylesbury
Banstead
Barrow-in-Furness
Barnsley
Barnstaple
Bath
Birmingham 26
Blackburn
Bishop's Stortford
Bootle
Bowhill (Fife)
Bridgend
Bristol
Bromley (Kent)
Brynmawr
Camden Town
Carlisle
Cardiff
Chard
Charlton-C-Hardy
Cheadle
Chelmsford
Cheltenham
Chippenham
Chiswick
Cinderford
Clacton
Clapham
Coatbridge
Cowdenbeath
Derby
Dewsbury
Doncaster
Dumfries
Durham
Ealing
East Grinstead
Edgbaston
Edlington (Doncaster)
Edgware (1)
Edmonton
Enfield
Farnham
Finchley (North)
Fleetwood
Forest Gate
Gerrards Cross
Gillingham
Glasgow
Godalming
Grantham
Guildford
Halifax
Hampstead Garden Suburb
Harpenden
Harrow Weald
Highgate
Hornchurch
Hull
Kenton (1)
Kingsbury
Lancaster
Leeds
Leek
Lingfield
Letchworth
Liverpool
Llandudno
Longworth
Loughborough
Luton
Macclesfield
Maidenhead
Manchester 16
Manchester and Salford Medical
Mill Hill (1)
Minehead
Moorpark, Renfrew
Morden (Surrey)
Motspur Park
Nelson
Newcastle-on-Tyne
Newquay
Newtown (N. Wales)
Northwood
Norwood
Orpington
Penrith
Perth
Pinner
Plymouth
Portsmouth
Prestwich
Putney
Radcliffe
Radlett
Reading
Renfrew
Rhondda
Rugby
Sheffield
Shepperton (4)
Skegness
Shepherds Bush
Shrewsbury
Southsea
Stockton-on-Tees
St. Albans
Stourbridge
St. Pancras
Sudbury
Sunbury (4)
Sutton
Talgarth
Tamworth
Topsham
Tonyrefail
Twickenham
Tunbridge Wells
Upminster
Waltham Cross
Warrington
Washwood Heath
Wealdstone
Wednesbury
Welwyn Garden City
Welwyn & District
Wembley
Weston-Super-Mare
Whitby
Whitefield (Man.)
Willesden
Winchmore Hill
Wirral
Worthing
Woodbridge
Woodford (Essex)
Wrexham

New Groups are being started in the following places, all readers, whatever their political opinions, will be cordially welcome. Please write to us and we will put you in touch with the Convenor.

Ashby-De-La-Zouch
Bermondsey
Birkenhead
Blackpool
Blotchley
Brighton
Chingford
Cleethorpes
Clifton
Coulsdon
Dorset
Dunstable
Epsom
Eton
Fareham
Gloucester
Hanwell
Hayes (Midx)
Hemel Hempstead
Hertford
Horsham
Kensington (Nth)
Kidderminster
Lambeth
Lancaster
Leicester
Llanelly
Lowesmoor
North Harrow and Raynes Lane
Plumstead
Ruislip
Slough
Stoke-on-Trent
Stockport
Stratford-on-Avon
Sutton Coldfield
St. Annes-on-Sea
Tulse Hill
Watford
Wood Green

Existence of Labour Monthly Discussion Groups has been reported from the following places, but we have had no recent news as to their activity. We should be glad of the co-operation of other Labour Monthly readers either to strengthen or revive such groups. Please drop us a line.

Bournemouth
Cambridge
Carshalton (2)
Greenock
Hyde (Cheshire)
Leamington (3)
Oxford
Peterborough
Port Talbot
Preston
Salisbury
Sidcup
Stamford Hill
Wallington (2)
Warwick (3)

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N.B.

1 Difficulties now general throughout the printing trade are delaying the production of R. P. Dutt's "*Crisis of the British People.*" The book will not be ready in June as promised, but we are told at the end of July. Further news in next issue.

2 This unfortunate delay is useful, however, to those who omitted to order a copy of the Special 3s. 6d. Birthday Edition by June 1st for now they are going to have another chance. The "last day" is shifted to July 1st. But that will be the very last "last day." Thereafter, *only* the 8s. 6d. Public Edition will be available.

3 Although the 3s. 6d. Special Edition is a very large one it will possibly be exhausted before all orders sent in are fulfilled. *Paid orders will take priority.* Therefore, those who sent orders without cash are urged to send in immediately the necessary 4s. to make sure of getting their copies. When sending, please write very plainly at the top of your letter: *Book already ordered.*

4 Collectors of "Grouped Orders" are urged to send in each sheet immediately it is completed. These orders are going to be fulfilled in priority of arrival at our office. Don't hold up any completed ones. Please note remark about cash in previous paragraph.

5 The widest distribution of Dutt's book is of great political importance. Play your part in in this task. You now have an extra month. Make fullest use of it.

ACT QUICKLY!

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Readers of Labour Monthly are invited to apply for membership of the Workers' Film Groups which are being formed at Marx House. Particulars of the aims and activities of the groups will be sent on application to the Secretary, MARX HOUSE, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1

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